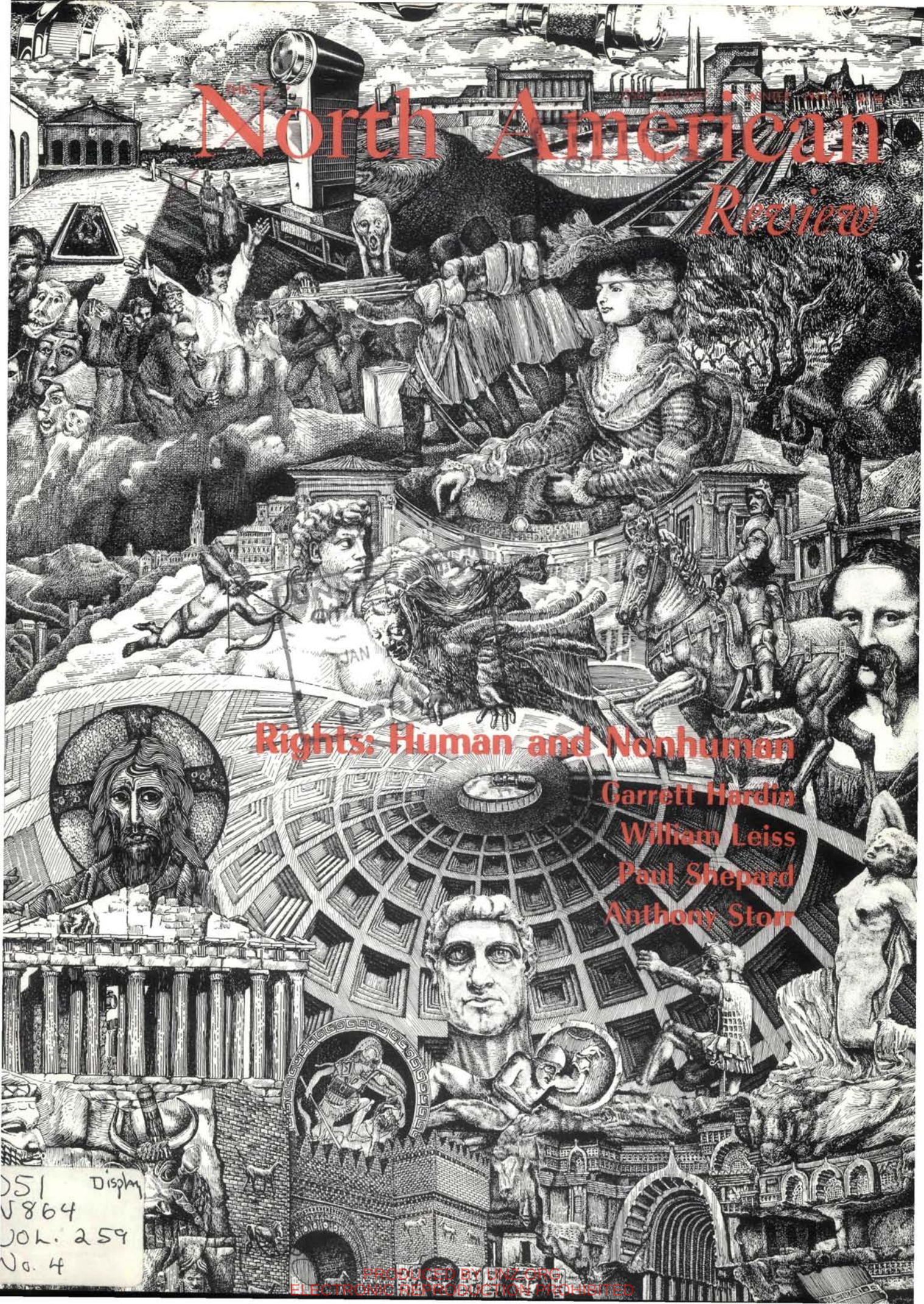

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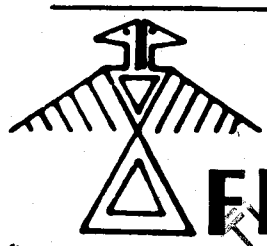

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Lately we seem everywhere to be reading of our own non-existence—in *Esquire*, where a new story by T. Coraghessan Boyle is accompanied by the note that it is Mr. Boyle's first appearance in "a national magazine"; in *The New Republic*, where we are lumped with the *Dial*, *Scribner's*, and other serial dodoes. *Hélàs*. Surely we are alive—or are we merely a dream? Perhaps for such provincial cities of the East as New York and Washington it is a nice (and Heraclitean) question: When the phoenix rises from its ashes —eleven years ago this month—is it the same phoenix?

At least *The New Yorker* has had the decency not to kill us off; a recent Charles Addams cartoon, showing a news vendor whose stock consists entirely of now-defunct magazines and newspapers, fortunately omits the NAR. And the December issue of *Redbook* carried—with our permission—the Jane Ciabattari story, "Hiding Out", which first appeared here in the summer of '74.

In any case, here in this number is an international line-up of authors whose work we've borrowed from the Conference on the Rights of Nonhuman Nature, convened last April at Pitzer College, in Claremont, California. The questions here explored are, fundamentally: Who do we humans think we are? Being human, how do we deal humanely with the not-human world? Knowing what we *ought* to do, how may we be persuaded actually to do it?

Addenda to the list of patrons who helped make the fall NAR a runaway success—these:

Mr. Hans B. Holst
Dr. and Mrs. V. M. Jessen
Mr. and Mrs. Myron E. Russell

The symbol at the left is one our readers will —we hope—become accustomed to. It remarks a fiction writer's first appearance in *any* "national" magazine.

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FEATURES

14 The Rational Foundation of Conservation, *by Garrett Hardin*
18 Man's Relationship with the Natural World, *by Anthony Storr*
27 The Imperialism of Human Needs, *by William Leiss*
35 Animal Rights and Human Rites, *by Paul Shepard*

FICTION

44 A Modern Language Association Convention Orgy, *by Edward Gubar*
50 A Branded Man, *by H. G. Hooper*
53 The Deserter, *by Timothy Southerly Goins*
61 Monsters, *by Mary Clearman*
66 The Signing, *by Stephen Dixon*

POETRY

43 In the Arms of Snake, *by Mike Borich*
52 On Becoming a Vegetarian, *by Kathe Agodoa*
60 By an Unknown Master, *by Carol Baker Hansen*

DEPARTMENTS

4 Foreign Correspondence: COMPLACENCE IN THE CROWD, *by Erika Thorne*
8 American Eye: WENDIGO—A FICTION, A FANTASY, *by John Lindberg*
12 Another Man's Poison: DOCTORS AND OTHER DANGERS, *by Kenneth Lash*
69 Books & Authors: BLACK SUPERFICTION, *by Jerome Klinkowitz*
75 Synecdoche: BRIEF NOTICES
76 Film: SHOW BUSINESS BUSINESS, *by Lawrence Sturhahn*

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Erika Thorne

Complacence in the Crowd

From all indications, the course of events during the UN Population Conference in Bucharest last August was not surprising. Evidently it is not unusual in the first few days of such a conference for representatives from each country to parade up to the podium and say, in many of the same words, most of the same things the speakers before them have said. It is only proper, it seems, for uncountable hours to be taken up in an event that lasts only two weeks—with each speaker publicly thanking the Romanian government and Secretary-General Antonio Carrillo-Flores for a fine planning and organizational job; each speaker commenting negatively or positively on the fact that the Provisional Revolutionary Governments of South Vietnam and Cambodia were not invited to send delegations; each speaker extrolling the virtues of UN Conferences wherein all governments can work together toward solutions; each speaker outlining his or her country's policies and progress in population matters. Experienced conference observers expect that a highly conventional World Plan of Action be drafted for the occasion, that it undergo intensive examination, debate and alteration in a fully representational Working Group and then be approved by the plenary body. Everything is in order, then, when hours and hours are taken up in the last few days by congratulatory speeches, most delegates proud of a job well done. Much of the real negotiating somehow takes place in small groups behind the scenes, beyond the reach of reporters or observers. One may suspect that the grounds for negotiation are somewhat different from the public rhetoric about assisting the developing, or Third World, nations in more humanitarian ways, for little in the World Plan of Action indicates any willingness to address the worldwide economic and social imbalances facing us. Nothing is amiss, apparently, to have cocktail parties, fine dinners and expensive hotels serve as the backdrop for all this talk about the great masses of the world's poor and hungry.

The Conference proceedings were a surprise to those not experienced in observing diplomatic and governmental affairs, however. The formal, affected atmosphere and the rhetoric and posturing it encourages seemed like a most inappropriate and even bizarre setting in which to have human beings discussing very human problems. The full plenary sessions, most formal of all, almost resembled a mystic, ritual dance whose movements and implications were obscure and unfathomable to the ignorant.

The real work of the Conference was done in four smaller bodies—three Committees and a Working Group—and while the dance rite continued in these sessions, the music was more subdued and the diplomatic tribal chants somewhat underplayed. The overriding point of tension, splitting most votes along the same basic line, was the difference in viewpoint between the developed and developing (they have been characterized as the exploiting and exploited) nations. A desire on the part of the former to further the present system—essentially to maintain the status quo because it has proved quite lucrative for them—continually clashed with the need and desire of the latter to change the system to provide equal footing for themselves. This is the conflict which has grown prominent in past international negotiations, and will continue to dominate the future global scene.

The images of and interplay between China, Russia and the US are illustrative. The US, still the most powerful country under the old system but ideologically dizzy from the Watergate whirlpool, economically uncertain on the home front and rocked by intense criticism from many countries on nearly every foreign and domestic policy issue, had all it could do simply to maintain its dignity and position. The USSR, long touting itself as the leader of the Revolution and champion of the oppressed, found itself attacked by the Third World as one of the exploitive super powers, taking from the poor and giving to itself just as enthusiastically as the western Capitalists. Russia and the US spent much time exchanging veiled insults and curt dismissals of each other's positions and policies.

China, on the other hand, played a slightly different tune, partly because of its different background. The Chinese delegates in their Mao suits walked and talked as though they were on top of the world, freely and potently attacking the US and the USSR for their inadequacies—and well they might; in the past 25 years China has pioneered many of the concepts that are now being recognized by visionaries throughout the rest of the world as potential answers to the Third World's needs. According to available information, China is outstanding among developing nations in reducing its population growth rate significantly, making health and nutritional care and information available to a majority of that population, dramatically improving the standard of living, and providing wide educational and economic opportunities for both men and women. With little outside help China has trained and networked a paramedical corps (the "barefoot doctors"), is expanding a system of simple rural clinics for medical education and treatment, and has instituted labor-intensive farming techniques. It has used its massive population instead of massive foreign

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capital investment to build and run power plants, factories and hydro-electric systems. China has trained teachers and made their services available to improve the practical skills and capacities of its single greatest resource, people. In doing this China has rejected the standard western models (highly trained, specialized doctors; large, expensive urban hospitals; huge machine-run farms; capital-intensive building techniques; non-practical, highly specialized education) and used its most abundant resources creatively to meet its needs.

China during the Conference gave the Third World something it has not had before: an ideological leadership, backed by the power of example, that must be contended with. Coupled properly with the growing economic power of the oil-exporting (OPEC) countries, this new leadership in an entirely new economic process could cement the Third World into a force proportionate at last to its great masses of people. The growth of the seeds of power already sown in this area is perhaps the most significant thing to come out of the Conference. It is frail and tentative growth, but it could foretell the emergence of the new system desired by the developing countries.

* * *

The Population Tribune was a nongovernmental forum for education and debate that ran concurrently with the Conference. It was not as formal as the UN proceedings; protocol, diplomacy and political maneuvering did not dominate the discussions nor taint their conclusions. The Tribune took place in the Law Faculty of Bucharest University, a pleasant twenty-minute walk from the Palace Hall, site of the UN proceedings. Participants felt free to wear shorts, halter tops and sandals; a small buffet of fruits, cheeses and breads was available to meet their food needs; and rooms were provided them for spontaneous meetings and discussion groups. They were over 600 strong, representing nongovernmental organizations (called NGOs), publications, themselves, or all three, and they ran the entire gamut of opinion and school of thought concerning population, development and food issues. They came to observe and participate in a program of panels, lectures, films, demonstrations and discussions.

The impact of individual events varied from overwhelming boredom to actual influence on the Plan of Action itself; speakers or exchanges elicited varying degrees of anger, frustration, challenge, or fulfillment from various groups and people attending. Long, involved lectures on the technical aspects of demography and long listings of AID (Agency for International Development) and UNFPA (UN Fund for Population Activities) successes by their officials were fortunately few in number. A slick slide presentation by a Thai Planned Parenthood International publicity man demonstrated the integration of birth control practices into village life through street vegetable peddlers, combination Coca-Cola/condom advertisements, pill blessing by local holy men, and condom-blowing contests in schools and

social clubs. As he cooed a "we add family planning to what is already there" slogan, women and developmentalists fumed at his disregard for in-depth female education on the subject and his lack of concern for the economic and social issues entwined with the population question.

Margaret Mead and Betty Friedan, a surprise combination, led the movement to include greater recognition of women in the Plan of Action. The Draft Plan had only one mention of women, a subparagraph in the "Reproduction and Family Formation" section, and this was expanded through proper pressure on the proper delegates to include more comprehensive recommendations and the addition of "the Status of Women" to the section title. Ms. Friedan stormed through Bucharest and left few who did not know she had been there, with those few surely wondering where the lightning over the Law Faculty was coming from. Dr. Mead, carrying her six-foot polished wood walking stick, lent her wry and weathered wisdom ("We in the west have got to realize that miniskirts are not essential to the integrity of women.") to several panels and discussions. Together they succeeded nicely in collecting and activating those interested in furthering the woman's position in population matters.

Two segments of the IUSSP (International Union for the Scientific Study of Population) lecture series taking place during the Tribune were perhaps the most memorable events of the entire program. Paulo Singer, a Brazilian economist, calmly and logically dismantled most of the conservative, family planning oriented arguments, and built one of the most individual and creatively conceived positions presented in Bucharest. While systematically demonstrating the negative effects on supply, demand and distribution a premature population decline in some underdeveloped countries might have, he cited equalization and development of resources as a necessary, major point of concentration, and the difficulty of dealing with that point under the capitalist system. As impressive as his logic was his manner and attitude. He focused his calm eyes and expansive thoughts on those with questions or comments, absorbing fully what they said and coming back instantly with a straightforward, honest reaction. His views seemed to be the result of a long period of listening to, synthesizing and creatively thinking about the population/economic problem, and through his own open-mindedness to different ideas he challenged all present to be as open and creative in their discussion and thought.

John D. Rockefeller III, one of the founders and principal financers of the population control and family planning movement in America, called for a re-evaluation and new approach to the population question. He said family planning had proved to be an insufficient approach by itself, and implied that development of the Third World must be more heavily emphasized in order for progress to be made. Because of the economic power he can put behind his ideas, this turnabout could have a tangible

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effect on US policies and operations in the field, in both the nongovernmental and the political realms.

Rockefeller seemed to surprise his large audience—the lecture was probably the best-attended event—with his refined dignity and gentle countenance. He was the picture of a philanthropist, with none of the callous, money-hard drive one might expect in the very rich. This favorable impression was not enough to keep members of an ad hoc radical group called the "non-Malthusians" from dominating the question period with shouted accusations of Rockefeller's personal responsibility for the murder of thousands in Africa, and for his masterminding of imperialist, genocidal policies rampant in US government population institutions. In reply he turned an infinitely puzzled face to the accusers as if to say simply "I don't know what you're talking about," and went on to questions he felt he could better understand. His apparently honest good will was quite disarming; combined with the speech itself it perhaps gave many skeptics a new hope that the entrenched, conservative American population establishment can still be changed.

The Population Tribune was to a certain extent a successful educational endeavor. For those who had come with a limited background in the population field, the wealth of information and diversity of viewpoint alone made the Tribune a tremendous learning opportunity. The Tribune process and results as a whole, however. were a disappointment. It was desired that people pragmatically examine the devastating facts of poverty and starvation before them as well as the ideological implications of those facts, exploring the grounds and bases for a potential positive outcome. Unfortunately, the dominant activity was finally a jockeying for the most visible soap box from which to spout one's own ideas; ideas that had been developed and spouted long before August of 1974, and which were not affected significantly by the events of that period. The great debate between those who see equalization of economic inequities as the path to population stabilization and those who see the path in greater distribution of contraceptives and family planning information (a debate which parallels the basic conflict between the developed and developing nations) raged on as before, the only novelty being the circumstances and setting. While the non-Malthusians were jumping up and shouting genocide at what frequently seemed unlikely times, the anti-abortionists were accusing everyone to the left of their own position of taking the celestial responsibility for life and death into their own hands, and the AID officials and the liberal NGO representatives were taking their customary and well-rehearsed pot shots at each other. Those in the population field—the people who have worked and will continue to work to influence what actually happens with regard to population—in general made a disappointing show of their ability to discuss, collaborate, compromise, or even listen.

* * *

The World Population Plan of Action establishes a goal for the developing countries of a birth rate reduction to 30 per thousand (average) by 1985. It cites the right of all couples and individuals to determine the number and spacing of their children and "to have the information, education and means to do so." It endeavors to promote the status of women and the "full participation of women in the formulation and implementation of socio-economic policy including population policies . . ." These are commendable and even impressive achievements. Addressing such problems is the purpose of UN conferences, and experienced observers would probably have expected no more strength and depth to the final document than was offered.

But if those well versed in the diplomatic norms expect no more, perhaps the citizens of the world should. "In the light of the principles of this Plan of Action, countries which consider their birth rates detrimental to their national purposes are invited to consider setting quantitative goals and implementing policies that may lead to the attainment of such goals by 1985." This is how the delegates chose to word the most basic action paragraph in the document. Can we expect no stronger words or commitments? The lowest common denominator among the nations present seemed to be agreement with the principle that any government may do as it sees fit. This principle, always held as the legal and philosophical basis upon which all problems must be approached, is used most often as a stumbling block to truly global, cooperative efforts. Can we continue to accept a common denominator so low it allows us no progress?

We live on a planet that is speeding into a global situation unlike any it has ever faced before. We are runing out of many irreplaceable resources; we are well on our way to polluting our seas, fresh waters and air beyond redemption; our population is growing exponentially and our capacity to produce food is not growing at the same rate.

These factors, whether we call them *symptoms* or *crises* or *ramifications* or *exaggerations*, combine to present us with an exceedingly complex destiny—undeniably global in nature, and from which no country may isolate itself. The urgency of these factors calls for a change in our traditionally complacent global approach. The old models of proper diplomatic protocol that tie our tongues with rhetoric and our hands with red tape no longer meet our needs. World conferences that expend reams of paper and further the archaic concepts of national sovereignty are no longer relevant to the changing global picture. A government that will not publicly recognize all peoples' interdependence in these issues, but chooses to placate its citizens with reassurances that their country will stand firm even as the world crumbles about it is detrimental to the emerging global society.

The nature of our situation calls for out-moded patterns of procedure

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to be dropped. Governmental realization that this world is a whole world, and the problems within it global ones, must be established and expanded. World conferences must be more than exercises in protocol; they must become a forum for intelligent, rational discussion—from a global perspective—of the complex and urgent problems facing us. Party lines and out-moded national policy statements must give way to more open communication, with less undercover negotiation based on economic interests. The global situation calls for an immediate global response; it is in the interest of survival itself for governments to make that response.

Such conclusions may seem obvious in contemplation, but they become incredibly complex in practice. The Population Tribune scenario of well-educated, well-prepared men and women coming together in a non-official capacity to discuss a vital question would seem to promise real progress toward ideological and practical answers to that question, but this was not the case. There are grounds for disillusionment in the fact that nongovernmental people were not able to make progress through free and open communication, but largely worked on the same restrictive, non-globalist premises observed at the formal UN proceedings.

When both our political and our nongovernmental leaders display this frustrating reluctance to come to grips more realistically and humanly with the current global situation, we cannot consider the World Population Conference a resounding success. To the contrary, it was a perfect example of normal, ineffectual diplomatic proceedings in their traditional setting. Only the flexing of recently-discovered Third World muscles offered any hint of change or progress, and it is a hint we would do well to take. New trails are being blazed by the Third World—ideologically, economically, and socially—and those following the trails are gaining in strength, numbers and momentum. It is becoming clear that the old models are counterproductive in a rapidly changing world, and the challenge of a new reaction to that world has to be met. If we hope to find solutions, and hope as well to implement them, we must leave our worn and inadequate ways to find the new paths this new world demands. □

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John Lindberg

Wendigo: A Fiction, A Fantasy

When I was a boy, and that was a long time ago, I lived with Pop on a small farm that was like a bowl set down in amongst the hills. The hills crowded us in on every side, and they were covered with thick trees like a pelt, so the hills looked like big animals asleep around us. I well remember seeing lights on their flanks at night. The lights were just people out coon hunting, but they were far off on the upper reaches of the hills and you couldn't hear any hounds bark. so the only sign was the silent gold winking lights. The winking came from the way the hunters carried their lanterns behind trees that cut off the light from moment to moment. But as a boy watching from the yard, I thought those quietly winking yellow lights looked like the eyes of hill-size animals that had waked up in the night and were searching me out, like a sleeping dog will suddenly raise his head from his shoulder and blink around to see what his nose had told him in his sleep. So I would watch those blinking eyes with scared fascination until I couldn't stand to stay out there in the dark any longer, and then I would go in to the family and the fire before the hill-size animals could see me.

We farm folk stuck to our valley the way I stuck to the kitchen on dark nights. Not many of us cared much for hunting. There wasn't time, for one thing. When you have to get up before the sun to do the milking, and work in the fields all day so the cows—and you—will have something to eat in the next winter, and then do the milking again after dark, why, as I say, you don't have much time for hunting or any such a wild thing that robs you of your sleep and strength. And then too the folks who did do the hunting were a shiftless lot, sleeping late, doing the milking any old time, letting the crops grow any old how, borrowing what we could ill afford to lend—and we could never expect it back neither. So when you don't hunt you stay away from the woods except to cut them down to clear fields and to make timber and firewood. Let the dark paths be for such like folk as understand their dark ways.

There was one man who was a worker and a woodsman both but he didn't amount to much either way. He was an inbetweener in another sense, too, because he was an Indian. We called him John, the way you call a nigger Sam, to let him know he can have a Christian name and place in his own sort of a way. John was an Iroquois, one of them big Indians, tall and strong, but he didn't use his strength to help himself. He did odd jobs, and when you needed him most to help with the planting or to take a hand in the hayfield, why, as often as not he was nowhere to be found, until he came drifting in out of the woods in his own good time. And yet he wasn't very reliable about the woods either. When wildcat got into the pig pen, or when deer started to dig up the seed potatoes, you'd think an Indian would know the way to keep them off or hunt them down. But no, he always had some explanation of how animals got away. So as I say, John wasn't much use to us neither in the fields nor in the woods, and people didn't much care when John lost his place. A man has to pull his own weight.

See, John had staked out his own place in the valley. He was there when we first came. He had a bark-built shed where he slept and he cooked over an open fire, and he had a few rows of beans and corn and squash along the bank of the creek. He caught fish and he hunted deer with a bow and arrow, and dried the meat. It wasn't no way for a grown man to live, that sort of a kid's camping out in the woods like that. So when Tom Brady came into the valley and took over John's place, no one stopped him. It wasn't like John had built up the place any. John had been there before we came, but all he had to show was a bark shed and a bean patch. It was no way to use the land.

Tom Brady just told John that he was going to build there, and if John didn't like it, John could fight. John looked down Brady's rifle barrel a minute, and then come around to ask all of us for help. Well, no one was going to get himself shot for a shiftless Indian; that was what the law was for. John could go to court, thirty miles down on the plain, if he wanted to, but he had no more legal right to the land than Brady did, no deed, not a mortgage nor a note to pay off, not even a tax receipt.

There wasn't a thing John could do. If he did fight Brady, and maybe hurt or even killed him, then the law would be there quick enough. So when John came to our place, Pop explained all of this to him, and when Pop was sure John understood just how helpless he was, Pop offered to take him on as hired man. A lot of people laughed at Pop for taking on such a shiftless fellow, and an Indian to boot, but there was no denying that now Pop had himself a hired man, and that was no small thing in a time and place where a man couldn't be sure of his next crop. So John lived with us. Tom Brady threw John's junk out of the bark shed and used the shed for his hen coop, and John slept in the loft over our kitchen where the chimney kept him nice and warm. It was a lot more snug and civilized than a leaky, drafty bark shed on the edge of the woods.

Now Tom Brady set to and made that place of his bloom. We were all hard workers, except for the hunting types, but Brady was one of those kind that never stops. His idea of a

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rest was to go and do another job for awhile. When the corn was laid by he would cut trees to make more crop space, and he sold the bark to the tannery and the logs to the mill, and he burned the tops for firewood. He pastured the cattle in the cut-over areas, and had crops on every square inch of cleared ground. He was an inspiration to us all.

Now things had been going on like this for a couple of years, with Brady coining gold out of grass, and John helping out on our place, when we began to get a regular plague of wild creatures. Maybe it was because of an extra-dry summer. Rattlesnakes came down off the hilltops and we'd find them drinking out of the hen trough and lying in wait for the rats that ate up on the spilled slop in the pig pen. Along in August you couldn't step outside without a horsewhip or a stick to clear away the snakes. Fox and wildcat were pesky around the hen coop of nights, and we had to lock up the ducks in the barn because fox could run right out to them in the puddles of the dried-up creek. Not even the big stock was safe out in the pasture. Once wildcat made off with a calf, and the cows and horses began to stay right in the barnyard all night long.

None of this night fear seemed to affect John. If anything, he took to disappearing into the woods even oftener and staying there longer than ever before. Once I went up to the loft to see why he was late to breakfast, and he wasn't there. But he had left all his clothes behind. That was easy to see, because he never had many, just a couple pair of pants, a shirt or two, and an old coat. And he was gone for three days and nights before he came back. The fourth morning, he was down to breakfast just as usual, in his old pants and shirt. But he must have been way out there in the woods where no one could see him, day and night, mother naked, and with no food nor drink but what he could gather for himself in that barren wilderness beyond our little bowl of a valley in the hills. It was scary to think of, and he looked like he had made a hard time of it. His face was all gaunted up and his eyes were kind of glazed, and when he took his corn bread and buttermilk out to the woodshed where he ate alone, he must have stumbled and dropped some because I found it lying all scorched in the ashes of the summer-kitchen fire.

Well, Pop asked John if the Indians had any knowledge of this kind of bad varmint weather in the dog days. But John said the Indians didn't think any animal was a varmint. They all lived together, and they lived off of each other, as they had to, and the Indians lived among them. But there was no fences, so there was no thieves. Every animal looked after itself, and no Indian ever tamed an animal. No Indian ever kept cows and horses and pigs and ducks and hens. Even the Indian's dog was still wild enough to fend for himself. And while an Indian killed as he needed food, he never got to depend so much on one kind of animal that he had to kill all the rest to protect it. Well, that made an Indian just about as good as a wild animal, and no better, except he could talk and so should know better than to go on so. But when Pop asked again about the varmints pressing in from

the hills the way they did, then John said something about the spirit of the season.

—What's that? snaps Pop, not believing he heard right.

—Wendigo. That's our name for him, says John.

—And who might that be?

—When the year runs as it always does, then Wendigo stays asleep, because he knows we do not need him. But when the weather turns bad, and the rains dry up, and a hard winter is coming, then Wendigo comes close to us to help us in our need.

—Is that what you were doing in the woods for three days? praying for help from a heathen woods devil?

John looked at Pop in something of the way that he looked at Brady's rifle when Brady threw him off his land. Then he looked far off at the woods and spoke in a flat voice:

—We do not pray to beg. We make ourselves clean and open to the spirit. We go a long way alone, and we do not eat or drink or sleep. We make a gift of ourselves because Wendigo keeps the good seasons from us only when we have done wrong.

Pop laughed from just behind his teeth:

—Well, I sure would like to know what we've done wrong, then, because it looks like a drought and a bad harvest and a dry winter. Why, even Tom Brady is like to be in trouble, and he works like any ten men. You can't say there's anything wrong with that.

—Tom Brady has made more changes in the valley than the rest of you put together, John agreed. Then he said something strange:

—He has made so many changes he must think he is a new Wendigo.

—Well, says Pop, again with that gritty laugh, I'd pit Tom Brady against a woods ghost any day.

And John says:

—It will be at night. And he wouldn't say any more.

Well, by now even the deer were beginning to come in closer to the cleared valley looking for the puddled creek water. We'd often find them with the cows, but of course they never came into the barnyard at night. And so animals that lived on deer came down the hills behind them, and once in a while at night you could hear wildcat running deer, a coughing squall moving along the edges of the pasture. Once it began before dark, when I went out to bring in the cows for evening milking. They didn't need any encouragement. The wildcat call started up as soon as I left the barn and it kept pace with me along the edge of the woods, going out to the cows with me, getting around behind me, and then following us in. I never saw a cow run in my life, not a full-grown cow, but they came close to it that night, lifting their feet as soon as they put them down, raising a dust as their hooves clicked over the stones. Now, it wasn't the wildcat so much, because a wildcat isn't much bigger than a large tabby cat. It was the harsh wild coughing squall, and the way it followed us. A wild varmint has no business following you around like that. Come to that, a wildcat is really too small to hurt deer. But wildcat can scare deer into a run with that terrible call, and then maybe pick off a fawn when the herd is tired. I never saw it, but it could be,

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and things kept on getting stranger and stranger that summer.

See, one morning we found big cat tracks in the creek mud, far bigger than wildcat. So we thought maybe we had a lynx come down from the mountains, or maybe even a panther, because the coughing squall was there every night now, moving all over the hills where the coon hunters' lanterns used to look like eyes. Nobody went out at night. Sometimes the call came right down into the fields and we could see a big dark shape bounding out from the trees and across the cleared cropland and fading back into the woods again. So now we knew where we were. And Tom Brady decided to put a stop to it:

—A man can't get no sleep, he complained. Always this unearthly caterwauling. It makes the cows nervous. They ain't giving down as much milk. And next thing you know, that big varmint will be after our pigs.

Well, sir, that fetched us. No one could afford to lose his pigs. We needed them to feed us through the winter. Without pork, salted and smoked, we would have to live on oatmeal and johnny cake. And even if the varmint didn't carry off our pigs before it was cold enough weather for butchering, we could never rest easy because he could always rip open the smoke house. He was getting bold enough for anything.

So, we asked John for help tracking down the beast. Seemed like anyone who spent as much time in the woods as he did should know something about the ways of the wild creatures. And for a change he was ready and willing. He just wanted us to wait until what he said was the right time for the spirit to bless the hunting. Only, while we were waiting for John's spiritual moment, the varmint began to move right down into the settlement. More than once he left his tracks in the dust of the road that joined the farms. Big tracks, they were, and a long way between them. He must have been the biggest varmint in the hills. And he proved it, too, because the last week in October he raided Tom Brady's pig pen, killed all the weanlings, and carried off the heaviest sow.

Well, Brady was that mad, he was just frantic. He took it as a personal insult. He had more pigs, and he could spare the loss better than anyone, but he took on like the varmint had condemned him to slow starvation. He was all for going off into the woods alone with his shotgun. But we talked him out of that. Any varmint that big and mean was likely to need more than one shot to kill him, and one man alone wouldn't be given time to get but just the one shot in. This was a job for all of us, and even then we'd be lucky not to shoot each other in the dark. So Brady went storming over to John and roars out:

—All right, then, goddammit, when we going to start this hunt? How *much longer we got to wait before* the spirit moves you, you heathen idjit?

John just smiled a little:

—I think you are ready. Yes, now is the time.

—I been ready for weeks. It wasn't me that was holding back. Let's get on with it, then.

Just so happened the next full moon was on Halloween, one of those

big orange punkin moons that smalls down into a glowing white disc as it rises. We all gathered with our guns and started out from Brady's pig pen. The trail was easy to follow, because, big as he was, the varmint had to drag the sow over one shoulder, and she left a wide drag mark streaked with blood in the dust. Under the moon it was like a broad white ribbon with black tracings on it. The ribbon went straight through the cut-over pasture and into the woods, and then it ended in a clearing where the varmint had eaten his fill and left the rest of the sow for foxes and crows. There wasn't much left, just a heap of guts and bones. We couldn't have cut off any of the meat for ourselves, it was all chawed over. And there was an awful stink that we couldn't understand, because the sow was still fresh.

Brady stood over the carcass and cursed pretty free for a minute or two, like he was working himself up to something. John stood next to him not saying a word, and when Brady was done he growls out:

—Lead us, you woods devil, you. Show me where to find that perishing abomination. I want to be the first to put my lead into him.

John never even looked down. He just walked into the darkness under the trees on the far side of the clearing. He never made a sound, of course, and we tried to walk the same, but we couldn't be quiet walking in a group, and it was dangerous to get separated. If John did lead us to the varmint, we wanted to be together when he found us.

It was perishing dark under the trees, even with the moon, and the leaves beginning to fall. There was a lot of hemlock and pine, standing up in black rows like sentinels watching us. And we could see eyes following us in the undergrowth, shining yellow specks that would pause, turn with us as we walked by, and then move off behind us with a pattering rustle like rain on dead leaves. These would be fox and badger but they made us feel uneasy like we were the ones being hunted. And once we had a big owl with a hoot so loud it seemed to jar the ground as he winged ahead. We could hear him hunting way off in the hills like he was calling in his own posse after us. But John never paid any heed to all this brushwood activity. He walked erect and silent and relaxed as a man in his own garden.

—You don't suppose he's just taking us out here to lose us and leave us alone in the woods, do you? somebody whispered. Because as well as we could see, we weren't following any kind of a game trail any more. John was leading us right through the brush now without any sign of a track, and we were climbing all the time. But just as we were going to stop and make John show us the way home, we broke through the undergrowth and came out in a high clearing. John stood to one side as we filed out into the open, and when we were all bunched together in the moonlight, he turned and stretched out his arm toward a pile of boulders at the crest of the rise. He looked like he was making a sign of some sort, and we glanced at each other and then back at him trying to make out what he meant. He did it again, more

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urgent, and made a few signs like we was to walk up closer to the boulders. No one breathed a sound for fear we might stir up the varmint before we knew where he was. Tom Brady was first into the rocks and disappeared in the shadows among the boulders. That was brave work. I wouldn't have gone in there alone for love nor money. We was all in a circle around the boulders now, with our guns cocked, waiting for anything to move. Then Brady suddenly stood up clear on top of the rocks and shouted back to John at the edge of the clearing:

—Why, you big red devil, there ain't nothing up here but . . .

That was as far as he got. All of a sudden the whole clearing was full of that same godawful stink as we had smelled at the pig's carcass. We looked around to see where it was coming from and we saw a ring of small animals around the edge of the clearing, badger, coon, fox, wildcat—all crouched down and staring at us out of their shining yellow eyes. And at the same time the big owl came back and glided down over Brady's head with a loud shouting hoot. And then came the varmint's call, a coughing squall that seemed to come from everywhere at once. We kept looking around and around in circles to see where he was coming from. Our guns was weaving like snakes' heads and our fingers was tight on the triggers. Then the varmint was there on the rocks with Brady, calling louder and faster and rearing up like some black northwoods beast, carcajou, wolf, bear, panther, I don't know what, bigger than a man and all legs and jaw and tail. Brady gave one wrathful scream, good enough to shout down the varmint, and then there was nothing to shoot at but a twisting black shadow in the moon. All of a sudden the varmint reared up alone with his legs spread like a man and his tail lashing. He had something in his mouth so he gurgled when he squalled. And we all blasted at once with our guns now we could be sure of not hitting Brady. Well, the varmint just seemed to fade into the night, like he had thickened out of it when he first appeared, and then the stink faded off, and we heard one last fading squall, and the animals were gone from their ring, and John gone with them.

Well, when morning came it was a sorry sight we saw. We had huddled all night around the boulders facing outward towards the woods with our guns. We didn't dare move for fear of getting lost without John. We built a fire on the rocks and tended to our wounds. Because we had done more damage to each other than to the varmint when we loosed off our shots standing in a circle like that around the boulders. We were all firing upwards at the varmint on top of the rocks, but we were in a panic and didn't aim well. Just about all of us had some heavy buckshot in us somewhere, and one or two would need stretchers to get home. We kept calling for Brady and John, and when it got light enough to see, we went over the ground for signs. But there wasn't a trace. If John had left any tracks, they were lost in the scuffed-over leaves where the animals had watched the fight. And we found no trail leading from the rocks like a varmint would make when carrying a man. It seemed like Brady and his beast just rose straight up into the air. All we ever found was Brady's wallet, full of folding money, lying in a pool of blood on top of the rock pile like an offering.

People back at the settlement sent out scouts to find us, and we groped our way back through unknown trails, shouting and firing off shots all that day. Nobody wanted to spend another night in the woods. And once we got home we just packed up and kept on going. There was some talk of tracking John down and lynching him for what he did to Brady. But that would need someone with the gumption of Brady to start it and carry it through. Besides, who but John could ever track John down? So we got all the horses and cows and pigs in a herd and drove them out of the valley, with our goods on carts. It began to rain at last when we were on our way, but it rained so hard it ruined all the crops that had been dying anyhow from the drought. For all I know, John and his Wendigo could have come back and burned all the barns and houses and torn down all the fences and let the woods back onto the land. They was welcome. The fields was wore out for crops anyhow. □

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Kenneth Lash

Doctors and Other Dangers

You Can't Beat the Texans but You Don't Have to Join Them Dept.:

Sakowitz, the grande department store of Houston, offers the Christmas shopper "Lessons in Conversation" (two lessons: one afternoon, one evening) from Truman Capote at $3000. It is one item among others which they call "the ultimate gift—the gift of knowledge." $3000 to learn how to lisp?

* * *

I've got a foreign lesion on my arm. Existing in an arid expanse of healthy flesh, this outpusst is a donation of what is called modern medicine. The parable is perfect: a powerful and complicated mix of chemicals is developed, discovered, tested, retested, quantified, computerized, introduced into the advanced pharmacopoeia. Another of those steps forward for man. One problem, though —it has to be injected into the veins by means of a regular old-time syringe. How many doctors know how to do that reliably any more? So from time to time they slip, the needle goes out of the vein, the chemical "spills." All hell breaks loose in your arm, hand, shoulder, wrist, fingers —outbreaks, uprisings, burnings, alarums in the night. "Sorry," the doctor says. And undoubtedly is. But after all, he's got three other patients shivering in three other rooms, eight or ten—who knows how many—out in the waiting room reading old copies of *Today's Health* (the doctor reads *The Wall Street Journal*), he's got to be out at the hospital by 3:15, back at the office by 4:30 . . . and on and on. Timetable medicine. Institutionalized medicine. Wide-spectrum antibiotics medicine. And worst of all—the internal disease—*rich medicine*. The care-lessness is in the cost. The American Medical Association could teach the Arabs something about price-fixing, the Pentagon something about wasteful duplication.

And the Hollywood guru something about becoming a false idol. It is sad and pitiable, the faith that Americans have in their doctors. They offer up their bodies with hardly a question or murmur, not expecting to be treated as adults, as equal partners in a process of cure, but more like scared-grateful recipients of the great mumbo-jumbo. Save for some major centers, health care in the United States ranks well below that of many other nations in effectiveness, it ranks well above most in per capita surgery (which means just what it suggests: a high incidence of unnecessary sur-

gery), and where it ranks in medical morality remains to be faced. Many people believe in Marcus Welby and in lollipop cops; some believe in the first thirty minutes of George C. Scott in *Hospital*. But everybody is becoming aware that what we call modern health care may or may not care enough, may or may not be healthy enough, but assuredly costs too much. I prophesy that U.S. medicine is pricing itself not out of the picture but *into* it. Watergate showed us lawyers in their BVD's. Pretty soon now the people are going to say to the doctors, "Undress please, and get up on that table. I'll be with you in a minute."

* * *

This year's Christmas miracle is likely to be a war in Jerusalem. More profoundly disheartening than any in history. Two thousand years of increasing human brilliance and there shines now in the east but one star, and its name is Oil. Bow then, and send great gifts.

* * *

I attended a, what—coming together?—at the Namby Pamby Unitarian Church the other night. Overwhelmed by niceness. String music, smiles, touches. Never a discouraging word. Made me realize how essentially religion needs a sword. A scare a thrill a promise. Good and bad. Us and them. And most of all, *It*. There has to be *It*. And *It* has to have many shapes, because there are many different eyes and dreams seeing *It*, but they have to be able to congregate, with their differences simply so many testaments, so many apparitions even, of the central truth, the *It*. Atomic wipeout, for example, cannot be such an *It*. Narrow therefore diffusive, but worst of all, non-selective. Where's the Us and Them to it? Only in the Kremlin, the Pentagon. And they're all sword. No string music. Virgil Fox at the Pentagon, maybe. Chaliapin at the Kremlin. A ten-hour peasant opera underneath Peking?

Ever since man found himself alive he's been trying to scare himself to death with apocalyptic visions of the end of the world. Turns out that might owe to a DNA intelligence molecule. But now that such an end is not only possible but even, by the logic of affairs, likely, the millennia of religious "protection" melts away, leaving us naked, embarrassed, furious. An end to the world and we aren't even to be damned, let alone saved? Just wiped out, like malaria? And all the time, Them has been Us? King Artie pulling a switchblade out

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of the stone? Intelligence running around in circles, with Presidents throwing the stone at it? Everybody everywhere s o r e, scared. Nobody afraid in their mortal soul.

One can do violence and pre-empt the ending . . . or hold hands and wait, smiling gently. I suppose that has always been the essential choice, the Two Camps. The fate Achilles thought he finally understood, one night outside the walls of Troy. His role in life, his character, determined in advance; his "individuality" a delusion, meaningless except as a miniscule element in the infinite story of man's world. But you see, he believed there was such a story. If he hadn't, he might have spared Hector. Recent anti-heroes believed there wasn't. Current populace doesn't concern itself with the matter. It makes technologic plans for a future it doesn't believe in. We behave toward each other with the indifferent hostility of characters in an epilogue. The story's over, what's the point of further civilities?

I find for example that many people no longer respond to appreciation. Send them a note saying that was a good thing you did, said, were. No response. No response to that kind of spontaneous reaching out is the other side of the coin on which a young woman is being slowly murdered down in the alleyway and nobody in the apartment house responds to her screams. It is perhaps even more profoundly ominous, because where is the danger in responding to appreciation? It has to be, again, in the "involvement." If I accept praise then I must also accept the possibility of blame. From you, a stranger. To hell with that kind of involvement. I'll stick to "meaningful relationships" (two case histories temporarily sharing the same loose-leaf binder). I'll take courses in meaningful relationships. I'll go to California and sit in a mud bath and *feel* meaningful relationships. Meanwhile buddy, bug off!

Manners, you know, courtesy, even etiquette, are all simply social attempts to institutionalize an amount of individual privacy—of animal "space"—in public places, public relationships. Being civil has to do not with respect for others as distinct personalities but with respect for the civic entity, the society. No society can exist without this civility, some of which it teaches, some of which it enforces. When such civility seriously diminishes one need not look far for the reason. "I get no respect," Rodney Dangerfield complains. So he opens a restaurant, feeds people, puts his hand on their shoulders. And hopes it won't get held up too often.

Lenny Bruce, to my mind the only authentic underground writer the United States has produced (the others learned how to be underground writers in college) saw this whole country as an extension, a colorama extrapolation, of t h o s e grab-and-snatch offices on Broadway between Times Square and 52nd street where the music and nightclub acts are put together, bought, sold, shipped out. A jungle of con people, the kind of human place that Joseph Conrad would have instantly recognized (and so profoundly described in *Heart of Darkness,* and as Herman Melville did in *The Confidence Man*). In a dream, Lenny Bruce informs me that a group of southern Baptists are smuggling arms to the Unitarians. I'm going to check on it and let you know.

* * *

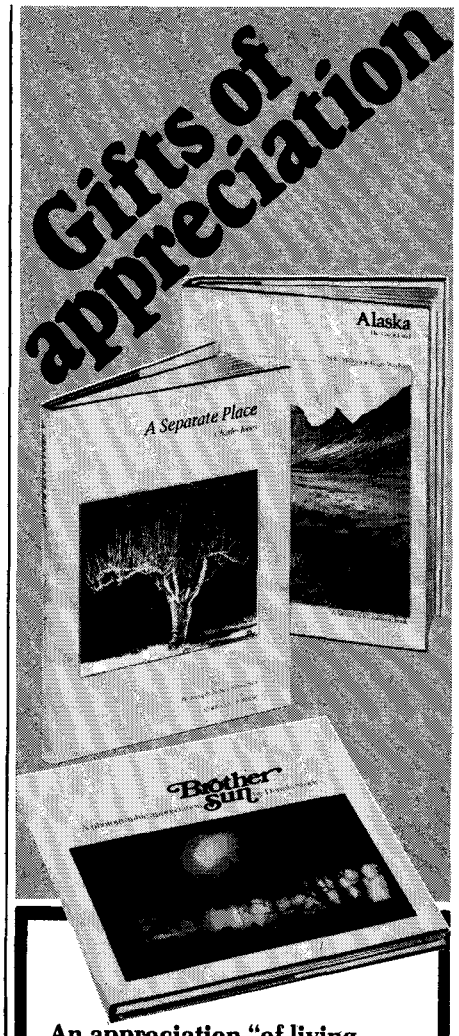
Suggestion for Papal Bull:

"To Our Faithful in the United States, on the Subject of Birth Interference: *We send you no ifs; we expect no Butz.*"

* * *

Twentieth-century literary criticism has discovered that the Victorians suffered a bum rap. It was partly their own fault, their PR image of "Victorianism," underneath w h i c h (and whom) they did a lot of what they presumably repressed. I have run across what strikes me as the perfect exemplar, perhaps one of the greatest last lines of a Victorian n o v e l (though written recently): "Your coarseness revolts me," said his wife mendaciously. (*The Family Tomb,* Michael Gilbert.) □

KENNETH LASH writes this column regularly for the NAR; he heads the art department at Northern Iowa.



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RIGHTS: Human and Nonhuman

Garrett Hardin
THE RATIONAL FOUNDATION OF CONSERVATION

1. In stereotype, "the rationalist" is an antisocial person who sacrifices sympathy for rigor. This may be so, but we should recognize that rationalism is fundamentally a social ideal: its goal is to make communication between people possible. On the broad base of rationalism, differences of opinion *can* be resolved. In the absence of a commitment to rationalism, communication gives way to communion: words become superfluous and conflicts are resolved by force.

2. Even the complete rationalist cannot find defensible reasons for all his actions. Aware of this, he is likely, in spite of himself, to fall back on Pascal and say, "The Heart has reasons that Reason knows not of."

3. Nevertheless the rationalist has the decency to regard his occasional reliances on Pascal as moral lapses. He tries to uncover the Heart's reasons. This is not easy.

4. Conservation requires saving something for the future—which often means foregoing the use of it in the present. The ratio of the "present value"—really, our present evaluation of deferred value—to the nominal future value is crucial to decision. Economists have something to tell us about this.

5. Present value = Future value divided by e^{bt}, where:

e = base of natural logarithms (ln)
b = ln (1 + interest rate)
t = time

6. Interest rate is brought into the picture by the following argument: Whatever money one ties up in goods conserved could be used for other purposes, e.g., put out at interest at the going rate. For a given expected future value, the higher the rate of interest the lower the "present value." Bluntly: The higher the rate of interest of money, the less likely is it that the rational man will conserve goods for the future.

7. For example, consider a future value of $100, where the maturation time for the "investment" is 10 years. If the general interest rate is 3%, the present value of $100 is $74.41. If the general interest rate is 7½%, the present value of $100 is only $48.52.

8. This is part of what is meant by "discounting the future". When interest rates are high, the future is more heavily discounted than when interest rates are low. The higher the interest rate the less a rational society will conserve.

9. Other factors also enter into discounting the future. The rate of discount is intuitively increased by generalized uncertainty and lack of confidence in the future, as it is also by inflation.

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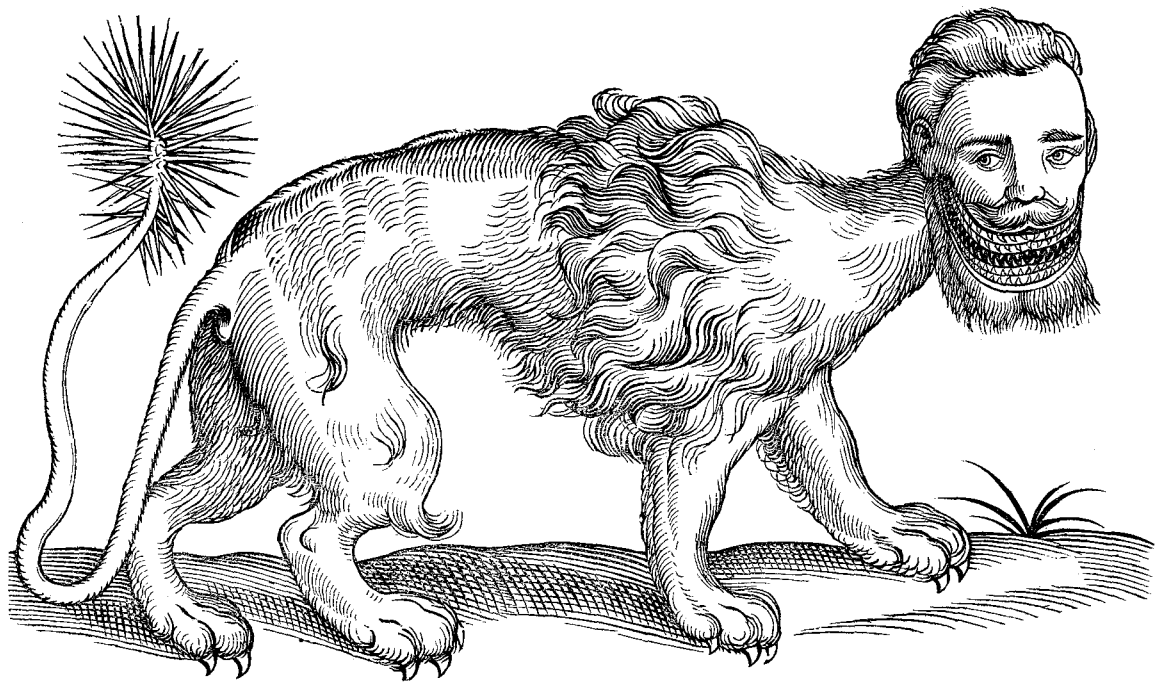

10. Over very long periods of time, economic discounting leads to answers which the conservationist's Heart cannot accept. Consider, for example, the question of planting redwood trees for future enjoyment. If a tree costs $1.00 to plant, takes 2,000 years to mature, and is worth $14,000 as lumber at maturity, what rate of interest would make this an attractive "investment?" Slightly less than ½% per year. If money brings any higher rate of interest we cannot justify planting redwood trees—under this mode of analysis. The Heart seeks other paths.

11. Worse is to come. Rationality demands always a *quid pro quo*—"something for something." And equity demands an equality of the two. If the interest rate is 3%, I regard a price of $74.41 as a fair one for a good that will appreciate to $100 in ten years. (If I can buy it for less than $74.41 I have struck an inequitable bargain.)

12. But what if the *quo* is paid by *Ego* while the *quid* goes to *Alter*—where's the equity in that? Even if the present value of a redwood tree were sufficient to justify planting it, why should *I* plant it?

13. John Trumbull (1750-1831) posed this most difficult question[1] of conservation long ago when he asked why should people act

> *"as though there were a tie*
> *And obligation to posterity.*
> *We get them, bear them, breed, and nurse:*
> *What has posterity done for us?"*

14. Reason has no reply; but the Heart tries. Edmund Burke, the great 18th century conservative, said: "People will not look forward to posterity who never look backward to their ancestors."[2] This is put in negative form: is the positive inference true? The Heart hopes so. It sees the roots of the past nourishing the shoots of the future.

15. Even if true, Burke's argument is less logical than psychological. It doesn't tell us how *we* can be more conserving; it gives us a recipe for ordering society so that our children will be good conservators—if we can control the upbringing of our children (a possibility which experienced parents heavily discount!).

16. Despairing of rationality, we may invoke "rights"—the rights of society, the rights of posterity, or (even more extreme) the rights of Nature.

This abstract and the three essays following were originally delivered to the Conference on the Rights of Nonhuman Nature, held at Claremont, California, April 18-20, 1974.

1 John Trumbull, *McFingal*, Canto II, Line 121. (1782) Edwin T. Bowden, editor, *The Satiric Poems of John Trumbull* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1962). p. 129.

2 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1961). p. 45.

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17. The rhetoric of rights is rationalistic in form, but the language is a camouflage. Rights do not exist in the same sense that chairs and tables exist, though rhetoric ignores the difference. The troubled Heart scurries around looking for rights the way it might look for a mouse.

18. Once "found"—that is, uncritically accepted—a right can justify anything. The omnipotence of a right is not its strength but its weakness. A right in ethics is like a "waterproof hypothesis" in science. That which explains everything explains nothing.

19. If we speak of the "rights of Nature" we will soon have to face these questions: *Which* rights? and *Which* Nature?

20. For example: the Heart cherishes the cathedral-like vistas in forests of the Big Trees in the Sierras. The way these forests looked in the year 1900 was regarded as a manifestation of "Nature," and pains were taken to keep fire away from these areas. Result: often vistas disappeared as "weed" species grew up and cluttered the forest floor. What we had supposed was an ecological climax formation was really a sub-climax, or a fire climax.

21. Where is "Nature" now? . . . To burn or not to burn? that is the question . . . . Those who assert the "rights of Nature" hope to avoid the necessity of personal, human choices. But they cannot—not if they would serve human ends.

22. "Let us cherish Nature for her own sake." What nonsense! Nature is a fiction created by the human psyche when we seek to avoid responsibility for the Heart's decisions. The voice of Nature is a human voice.

23. This voice can be very persuasive. Christopher Stone's recording of it[3] is magnificent, and the legal rhetoric may prevail. Useful fictions, legal or other, always make the rationalist nervous.

24. Is it impossible to find a rational basis for conservation? Let's look at the frame of reference. We have failed so far because our reference frame has been the conventional one of both ethics and economics, as they have developed in the western world.

25. That ethics and economics are identical may come as a surprise to those who think of ethics as a "higher" mode of thinking. But is not Martin Buber's "I-Thou" ethics[4] merely a sweet harmonization of "*quid pro quo*"? From Kant to Buber we are admonished to consider the *other* as an end always, never to be used as a means—in blunter language, to give other the quid lest he give us the shaft.

26. Hans Jonas[5] has pointed out how pervasive the I-Thou orientation is in our ethics. No wonder conservation seems rationally impossible.

27. John Rawls' *A Theory of Social Justice*[6] has been widely hailed as a splendid statement of the best ethical thought. Yet, if this is all there is to the idea of justice, conservation is impossible. In the second paragraph of his book Rawls says:

> Each person possesses an inviolability
> founded on justice that even the welfare
> of society as a whole cannot override. For
> this reason justice denies that the loss of
> freedom for some is made right by a greater good
> shared by others.

If this is not clear enough, consider what Rawls writes a hundred and four pages later (p. 107):

> The pursuit of reasonable policies . . .
> is something that earlier generations owe
> to later ones, this being a question that
> arises between generations . . . . I mention this
> speculative and difficult matter . . . But I
> shall not pursue this thought here.

27. "Speculative and difficult matter" indeed! Is this the best a philosopher can do for all problems of intergenerational justice? Rawls' treatise is 587 pages long—but the words "posterity", "future" and "discounting" are not to be found in the index.

28. The implicit frame of reference of Rawls' work, and almost all other western treatments of ethics, is this:

I-Thou, Here and Now

Even though they temperamentally are opposed to quantifying as economists and scientists quantify, at an intuitive level ethicists discount the future even as economists do. At even the lowest rate of interest, the distant future virtually disappears. Posterity ceases to exist.

29. Ethicists may make momentary references to what we "owe" to later generations, or to our (undefined) "responsibility", but this is mere cant: they don't propose to do anything about it. This is a "speculative and difficult matter" left—*to the future!*

30. "The squeaky wheel gets the grease." The Here precludes our giving attention to others elsewhere. "I-Thou" defines face-to-face ethics. If I can't see your face why should I care what happens to you?

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3 Christopher D. Stone, *Should Trees Have Standing?* (Los Altos, Cal.: Kaufmann, 1974).

4 Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Scribners, 1970).

5 Hans Jonas, "Technology and Responsibility: Reflections on the New Task of Ethics." *Social Research*, 40:31-54, 1973.

6 John Rawls, *A Theory of Social Justice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).

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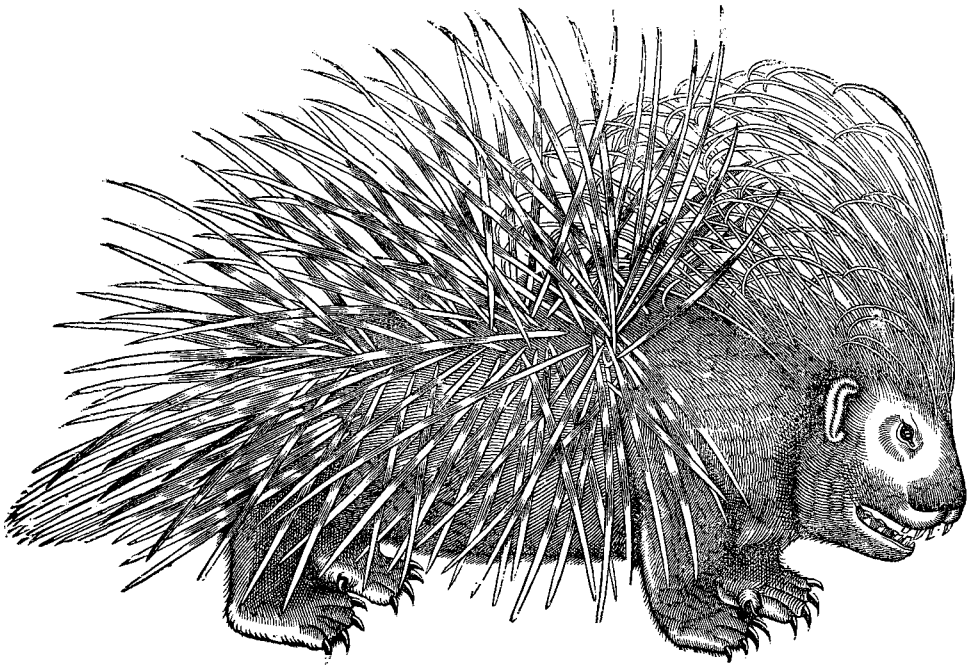

31. "Which is more important—redwood trees, or the welfare of little black babies in the inner city?" In the *I-Thou, Here and Now* frame of reference the redwood trees must go. (Posterity can fend for itself. It can look at color prints of redwood trees.)

32. Ferdinand I (1503-1564), a Holy Roman Emperor, neatly voiced this attitude long ago:

Fiat justitia et pereat mundus

("Let justice be done, though the world perish.")

This is *I-Thou, Here and Now* ethics with a vengeance. (Vengeance may indeed be the right word for much that is done in the name of "justice".) Vengeance is viable, politically speaking. (And anyway, how many votes does posterity have?)

33. As an alternative frame of reference we might consider:

Everyone—Forever.

This is the ideal implied by the adjective *catholic;* after centuries of decay the ideal has been given new life by the ecology movement.

34. This reference frame introduces difficulties, however. If all the lives of everyone everywhere and forever are weighted equally, *Ego* gets short-changed. One over infinity is nothing. The Heart has gone too far: egocentric rationality must put a rein on it.

35. As a compromise, let us consider an intermediate frame of reference:

Comrades—Today and Tomorrow.

36. The time reference, *Today and Tomorrow,* is less extensive than *Forever,* and suggests a weighting system that allows an appreciable weight to the needs of the present, some sort of negative exponential decay function for the tomorrows, perhaps.

37. The word *Comrades* acknowledges a less-than-catholic interest in others. Tribalism, if you wish: in-group and out-groups. (We expect others to behave this way too.) The peril to survival of the tribalistic orientation has been well advertised in the past generation: but is survival without tribalism possible?

38. The power of Brotherhood is created by the sea of otherhood around it. *Universal* Brotherhood is a psychological impossibility; the attempt to create it engenders universal otherhood and universal alienation.

39. A great practical virtue of the *I-Thou, Here and Now* reference frame is that it is rigorously Darwinian (though this will no doubt surprise ethicists). By *quid pro quo* the interests of *Alter* become *Ego's* interests, and natural selection can proceed.

40. Paradoxically, the effectiveness of Buber's *I-Thou* orientation depends on its appeal to selfishness through the *quid pro quo* mechanism. It is an extended selfishness, if you wish, but selfishness none the less.

41. Conservation requires a different frame of reference. One such has been suggested here, but the quantification of it has been left unsettled, and its foundations are not yet secured. The Heart is not yet satisfied. □

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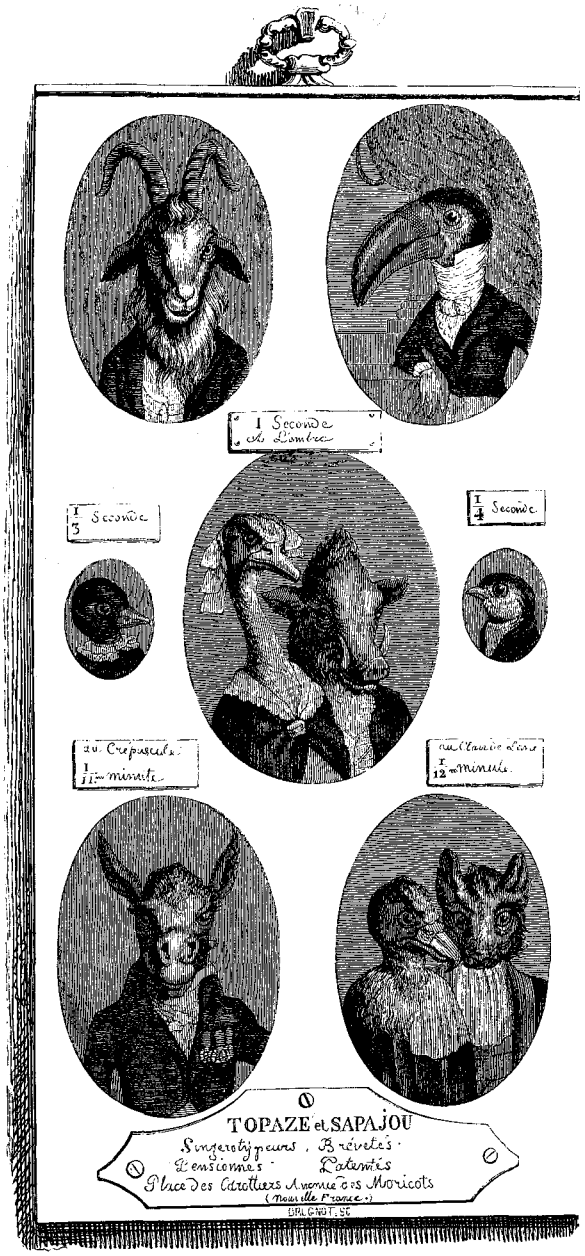
Anthony Storr
MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NATURAL WORLD



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In considering the question of whether non-human nature can be said to have "rights" we are, I believe, compelled to examine man's relationship with the natural world from the standpoint of both ethology and dynamic psychology. If our relationship with nature was itself "natural" in the biological sense, we should not need to ask whether non-human nature has "rights"; for, without formulating this question, we should be behaving as if such rights were self-evident. The majority of living creatures achieve a subtle, balanced interaction between themselves and their environment in which both continue to flourish. For this ecological equilibrium to persist, it is necessary that an animal should treat the environment with what, if it were human, we should call respect—neither destroying the source of food and shelter, nor treating it with such delicacy that it cannot make use of it. Men, on the other hand, tend to treat non-human nature with either ruthlessness or sentimentality; and, especially when "civilized", seldom seem able to maintain or achieve the balanced interaction which comes "naturally" to animals. The price of consciousness is alienation; and the price of alienation is still more consciousness.

Now that both our food supply and our energy supply are in danger of running out, we shall be compelled to behave with more consideration to non-human nature; and because we are no longer close to nature we have to do this by the use of conscious deliberation. Complex human societies find it necessary to construct rules by which the conduct of individuals towards each other are governed, and, when formulated, these rules become enshrined as the Law. Attempts have been, and are being, made to do likewise in the case of some aspects of non-human nature (for example, the International Whaling Commission has undertaken to protect, completely and indefinitely, five different species of whales). But of course such undertakings are only a meagre beginning; and we have to go much further, not only in regard to protecting species in danger of extinction, but also in creating a body of law which will govern man's conduct towards every aspect of the natural world.

That there is such a thing as a balanced interaction between an animal and its environment is generally accepted by biologists. The balance can of course be upset —by change in climate, for example, or by other "natural" changes like earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. Species emerged, flourished and disappeared for a variety of reasons, long before man made his appearance upon earth. But, natural catastrophes apart, such changes are for the most part slow, so that, in terms of human observation, at any one time there generally appears to be a near-perfect ecological balance except where man has disturbed it. Thus, Wynne-Edwards, in his book *Animal Dispersion in Relation to Social Behaviour,* is able to write: "Where we can still find nature undisturbed by human interference, whether under some stable climax of vegetation or proceeding through a natural succession, there is generally no indication whatever that the habitat is run down or destructively overtaxed. On the contrary,

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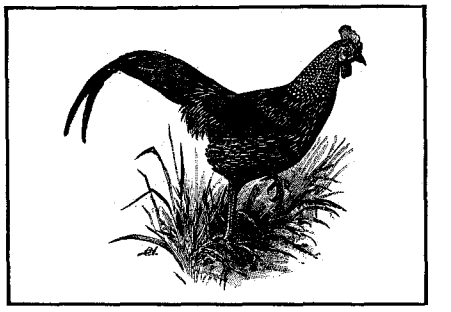
the whole trend of ecological evolution seems to be in the very opposite direction, leading towards the highest state of productivity that can possibly be built up within the limitations set by the inorganic environment. Judging by appearances, chronic over-exploitation and mass poverty intrude themselves on a mutually-balanced and thriving natural world only as a kind of adventitious disease, almost certain to be swiftly suppressed by natural selection."[1]

On the other hand, over-exploitation is characteristic of man, or, at any rate, of civilized man. Over-fishing has led to the extinction of some species of whales, and is a constant threat to the populations of the chief commercial fishes, like cod and plaice. Wynne-Edwards points out that "there is no difference in principle between man exploiting fish or whales and any other predator exploiting any other prey. All predators face the same aspects of exactly the same problem. It is impossible to escape the conclusion, therefore, that *something must, in fact, constantly restrain them, while in the midst of plenty, from over-exploiting their prey*. Somehow or other 'free enterprise' or unchecked competition for food must be successfully averted, otherwise 'overfishing' would be impossible to escape; this could only result in lasting detriment to the predators and the risk, if they persisted in it, that the prey might be exterminated altogether."[2] The study of "overfishing" reveals that there is more to the relation between an animal and its environment than a simple equivalence between population and food-supply. That is, the limitation of population by mere shortage of food is unsatisfactory for the purposes of survival. For this ultimate sanction preventing further increase of population generally implies that "overfishing" or its equivalent has already occurred. That is, the environment has already been so over-exploited that its power of regenerating itself has been impaired and may never recover. In other words, for the optimum relationship between a population and its environment to obtain, control over population size must operate at a point *before* starvation becomes a threat. As Wynne-Edwards puts it "It is easy to appreciate that if each species maintains an optimum population-density on its own account, not only will it be providing the most favourable conditions for its own survival, but it will automatically offer the best possible living to species higher up the chain that depend on it for food. Such *prima facie* argument leads to the conclusion that it must be highly advantageous to survival, and thus strongly favoured by selection, for animal species (1) to control their own population densities, and (2) to keep them as near as possible to the optimum level for each habitat they occupy."[3]

Animals do not, of course, sign international agreements which, in the case of man, serve to prevent over-exploitation of the environment upon which we all depend. But animals do subscribe to "conventions" of various kinds which serve exactly the same purpose. The territorial system adopted by many species of birds before the breeding season is perhaps the best known. By staking out a claim to a particular area which is fiercely defended against all comers, the bird is ensuring an adequate food supply for itself and its family; it is limiting the population allowed in any given area, and it is substituting territorial competition for direct competition for food.



There is evidence that the size of the territory selected is related to the amount of food it may be presumed capable of producing. Thus, something like an optimum relationship between population and food resources is regularly obtained which allows both the population to flourish and the habitat to renew itself. Naked competition for food without the adoption of conventions regularly leads to over-exploitation.

Another example of a convention which has survival value is that of the hierarchy. In social animals in which a well-defined pecking order is established, fighting is controlled, since each animal knows his place and will submit to a more dominant animal. Similarly, if there is a shortage of food or mates, the convention of a hierarchy ensures that the less dominant animals will not dispute the rights of the more dominant. This sacrifice of the weak to the strong may offend our notion of democratic equality, but is nevertheless adaptive for the group, since the survival of the latter is clearly better served by the survival of its strongest members. The bulk of Wynne-Edwards' book is devoted to the description of how differing species regulate their numbers in accordance with the varying productiveness of the habitat in such a way that the population may flourish and the habitat or prey be allowed to renew itself. There are many fascinating and complicated ways in which these goals are achieved, and they depend upon the achievement of social organizations in which information can be transmitted both as to the size of the local population and the presumed resources available to feed it. That these regulatory mechanisms work so well in species which lack the capacity for abstract thought may seem remarkable to us only because we tend to over-value that human peculiarity. What is more relevant to our purpose is to consider why they do *not* work in man.

There is a good deal of evidence to support the notion that the population growth of primitive man was regu-

1 Wynne-Edwards, V. C., *Animal Dispersion in Relation to Social Behaviour*. Edinburgh; Oliver & Boyd, 1962 [New York, Hafner. 1962].
2 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
3 Ibid., p. 9.

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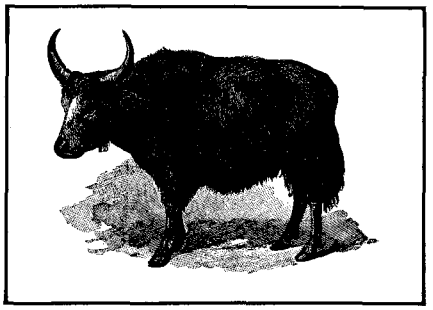
lated by measures analogous to those we can see operating in the animal kingdom. That is, except in times of actual famine, population increase was not curbed by lack of food, but by "conventions" which prevented increase outstripping food supply. Whether these conventions were the result of conscious deliberation, or whether they were adopted automatically and unconsciously—as we must assume happens in creatures lower down the evolutionary scale—is a controversial matter. It seems to me not unlikely that some so-called "traditions" which serve



an adaptive purpose have been adopted without any individual ever having thought them out or advised their incorporation into tribal rules of conduct. Whether this is so or not, homeostatic control of population in primitive man was undoubtedly in operation. The conventions adopted included abortion, infanticide, and abstention from sexual intercourse during lactation. Since breast-feeding was often prolonged for as long as two or three years, this latter convention provided a considerable check upon population growth, while infanticide carries with it a survival advantage in that it is primarily the weakly and malformed which have been allowed to perish. In addition, primitive peoples are generally dispersed according to some definite territorial system, so that the analogy with the behavior of other mammals living in the wild appears complete. The idea that the life of primitive man was necessarily "nasty, brutish and short" seems not to be supported by the evidence; and modern anthropologists take the view that many primitive peoples are better adapted to their environment than is civilized man to his.

Civilized man has become humanitarian. He has not only abandoned the conventional checks upon population growth employed by his ancestors, but has compounded this error by the indiscriminate provision of the preventive and curative techniques of modern medicine. Since food production has not kept pace with the population explosion, the result has been a huge increase in the number of peasants kept in a chronic state of malnutrition and hopelessness. It seems certain that civilized humanitarianism has increased the sum of human misery. The evils of the population explosion and the urgent need for controlling it have been so often emphasized in recent years that it is otiose to pursue the topic. Although this insane increase in our numbers is the greatest threat to our survival, and the best evidence of something sadly wrong in our relationship with non-human nature, there is some danger that, in our preoccupation with this threat, we shall become unmindful of other aspects of the problem. That is, even if we succeed in reducing world population to acceptable proportions, we shall not have achieved a proper relation with the natural world.

As we have seen, the principal method by which both animals and primitive man prevent themselves from over-exploiting the environment which sustains them is by regulation of population rather than by individual restraint. Implicit in the use of this method is the notion that the individual, finding himself in an environment which richly supplies his needs, will not personally exercise restraint, but will take from that environment all that, or more than all that, he needs. One cannot expect a hungry individual, whether human or non-human, to take a long-term view and fail to fill his belly now when prey is in short supply, even though he may realize that more hunting is likely still further to diminish the reproductive capacity of the prey itself. This being so, adaptation has taken place through regulation of the number of predators rather than by means of control of appetite. When prey is abundant, some predatory animals, for example lions,[4] will kill and eat more prey than they actually need; and domesticated animals like cats and dogs may develop greedy habits of almost human proportions if allowed to do so. But man is surely unique in that he exploits the environment for symbolic reasons as well as for practical ones, and it is this characteristic of man which tends to be under-emphasized by writers who make comparisons between human behavior and that of other animals. In the modern world, there are very few primitive men left whose adaptation is comparable to that of other mammals; and although, as I have pointed out, anthropologists may now argue that these few tribes of hunter-gatherers have maintained a better relation with the environment than that of civilized man, yet the processes which led to the development of civilization were themselves adaptive, at any rate initially. In his book *On Aggression*,[5] Konrad Lorenz has pointed out that natural selection is not always perfect in its operation, but may lead into blind alleys which result in the destruction rather than the preservation of species. Man's capacity for abstraction and symbolization has made possible the creative achievements which have ensured his supremacy; but this capacity contains within it the seeds of his possible self-destruction, because it automatically involves an "unnatural" attitude toward the environment.

In *The Dynamics of Creation*[6] I drew particular attention to the fact that man's peculiar type of adaptation to the environment depends upon his persistent immaturity. It is generally recognized that man, in adult life, continues to display characteristics which, in other species of primates, belong to the foetus or juvenile

4 Schaller, George B., *The Serengeti Lion*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972. pp. 276-9.

5 Lorenz, Konrad, *On Aggression*. London, Methuen, 1966 [New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1966]. pp. 32-33.

6 Storr, Anthony, *The Dynamics of Creation*. London, Secker & Warburg, 1972 [New York, Atheneum, 1972].

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animal, and which disappear when the animal reaches maturity. These characteristics are both anatomical and physiological, and also psychological. If man's childhood were not prolonged by what Freud called the latency period, he would not have the same capacity for learning from his elders, an essential prerequisite for the transmission of culture. Nor would he retain his curiosity and his delight in play, both of which traits decline in other animals when maturity is reached. I have suggested that the postponement of the capacity for "adult" sexual satisfaction encourages the development in man of passionate enthusiasms for achievements and pleasures which are not directly instinctual or physical, with the result that he pursues knowledge or the delights afforded by the arts with as much determination as he pursues the opposite sex. Man's persistent immaturity leaves him restless and discontented; but it is a "divine discontent" which spurs him on to symbolic achievements. It also endows him with peculiar attitudes toward the environment.

Instead of treating the natural world on terms of near equality—that is, as possessing rights—he tends to treat it either as something to be subdued or else as something in which to merge and lose himself. It may seem absurd to those unfamiliar with psychoanalytic thought to suppose that man treats Nature in terms of dominance or submission as he might treat another human being with whom he had not been able to establish a one-to-one relationship, but I believe that these attitudes can not only be demonstrated, but are actually important for our understanding of what has gone wrong in our relationship with the natural world. Both attitudes are ultimately "childish", and both are expressions of our tendency to attribute to non-human nature characteristics belonging to ourselves or to figures from our early childhood. We project into Nature our own moods, needs, hopes and fears; and because we see the natural world through the clouded spectacles of our own subjectivity we treat it not as it is—a neutral reality with which we have to learn to live and interact—but as something upon which we prove our strength by subduing it, or else turn to for nurture and support. In *The Romantic Rebellion*, Sir Kenneth Clark begins a chapter on Constable with these words: "Nature, the goddess of the early eighteenth century, had, like most divinities, two aspects; the ferocious, vengeful and destructive, and the tranquil, comforting and creative. We may call them (with reservations) the Byronic and the Wordsworthian. In painting Géricault and a great part of Turner represent destructive nature; comforting, health-giving nature is represented by Constable."[7] Traces of these two aspects and the attitudes which accompany them can be found throughout history, although the one in which nature is regarded as threatening, or disordered and in need of subjugation, has perhaps been predominant—or at least more obvious.

Such an attitude has not lacked religious justification. In the Authorized Version of the book of Genesis we read: "And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue

it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.' "

Although nature is not here painted as threatening, the words "subdue" and "dominion" indicate the notion that the natural world has been created for the benefit of man, and that he is encouraged and indeed enjoined to subjugate it. It is true that the God of Genesis, while rash in encouraging man to be fruitful and multiply, was wise enough to indicate that the resources of the earth were not infinite, and hence accompanied his dubious injunction to subdue the earth with the instruction that man should also replenish it—an instruction which has been signally neglected. But the tenor of the passage supports the idea that man is a special creation, an imitation god who is no longer part of nature but lord of it, with little need to consider that nature, too, might have its rights.

The idea that nature has to be subjugated rather than cajoled or made the object of co-operative endeavor is reinforced when nature is regarded as terrifying. When man is confronted by something of which he is frightened, he either retreats in alarm, or else is stimulated to conquer. When gorillas were described by travellers in the middle of the nineteenth century, they were supposed to be both malignant and ferocious. As a result, they were mercilessly hunted to the point of near-extermination by hunters intent on demonstrating their own courage and superiority. Thanks to the observations of George Schaller, we now realize that gorillas are essentially peaceable, and that, provided we respect their rights, they are most unlikely to encroach upon our own.[8]

The idea that nature has to be subjugated to the will of man dates back at least to neolithic times. It is pos-

7 Clark, Kenneth, *The Romantic Rebellion*. London, John Murray, 1973 [New York, Harper & Row, 1974]. p. 265.

8 Schaller, George B., *The Year of the Gorilla*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964 [London, Collins, 1965].

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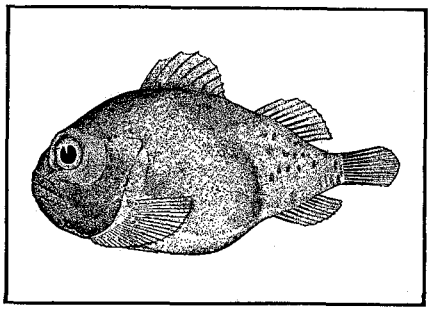
sible, without retrospective idealization, to argue that the hunter-gatherers of paleolithic times interacted with the natural world in a balanced way, since those who survive still do so; but directly man became predominantly sessile and agricultural, his attitude toward nature changed. The paleolithic hunter, drawing on the walls of his cave, depicted only the large animals that were difficult to hunt and kill. The act of painting was not only a magical rite designed to bring success in the hunt, but a practical procedure which actually made such success more likely. The more clearly the primitive hunter could realize the image of his dangerous prey, the better his perception of it in reality. As Herbert Read puts it: "Far from being a playful activity, an expenditure of surplus energy, as earlier theorists have supposed, art, at the dawn of human culture, was a key to survival—a sharpening of faculties essential to the struggle for existence. Art, in my opinion, has remained a key to survival."[9] Only the large animal was depicted, because only the large animal was threateningly in need of subjugation. "The rest of creation, the landscape, the plants, the fowls, and the fishes that could be caught without danger or effort—these called for no revealing images, for no magical identifications. Thus we get this otherwise inexplicable concentration on the animal, on the living flesh that meant life to prehistoric man."[10]

From what we know about the surviving tribes of hunter-gatherers, it appears probable that the desire for mastery of nature went only so far as was necessary for survival. That is, primitive hunters kill for practical reasons rather than for symbolic ones; to protect themselves from danger, or to obtain meat, rather than to prove their courage or demonstrate superiority. Indeed, their relationship with the prey is such that they feel impelled to apologize for having killed it.

Our spear strayed from its course,
O Father Elephant!
We didn't mean to kill you,
We didn't mean to hurt you,
O Father Elephant!
Don't be angry with us
From now on your life will be better,
You live in the land of the Spirits
Our fathers will go with you to renew their bond,
You live in the land of the Spirits.[11]

Thus sing the Akoa pygmies after an elephant hunt. As Carleton Coon points out in his book on the remaining tribes of hunter-gatherers, the remarkable thing about such people is the closeness of fit between them and their environments. "Such peoples have had the energy, hardihood, and ingenuity to live and live well in every climatic region of the world not covered by ice-caps. They have done so with stone tools and no firearms . . . . Some hunters are as familiar with the behaviour of local animals as are professional ethologists. Others know as much as botanists do about the identification and pharmacological properties of local plants."[12]



Directly man abandons nomadic hunting for settled agriculture, his need for mastery of his environment increases, and this is reflected in a change in his art. Neolithic, as opposed to paleolithic, art is characterized by geometrical pattern-making. Abstraction has replaced the depiction of animals. The psychological significance of this change is important for our understanding of man's relationship with the natural world, and it is interesting to find that different authorities agree that the urge toward abstract pattern-making is intimately connected with the wish to master the environment and to bring order and tranquility to what would otherwise be unruly and uncontrolled. Thus Worringer, in *Abstraction and Empathy*, writes: "The less mankind has succeeded, by virtue of its spiritual cognition, in entering into a relation of friendly confidence with the appearance of the outer world, the more forceful is the dynamic that leads to the striving after this highest abstract beauty."[13] And in *Prehistoric Pottery and Civilization in Egypt* Max Raphael writes: "The beginnings of pottery were rooted in necessity, the beginnings of its ornamentation were rooted in mathematics, in the sense that there was a will to abstraction, i.e. to achieve a certain detachment from the physical quality of the object, to distil and bring forth from amorphousness something simple, limited, fixed, enduring and universally valid. The neolithic artist wanted a world of forms illustrating not changeable and transient activities and events . . . but rather the relations of people to one another and to the cosmos within an unchanging system. The intention was not to suppress the content of life but to dominate it, to compel it to surrender its physical ascendancy to the power of creative will—to man's drive to manipulate and refashion his world."[14]

To modern urban man the peasant cultivating the soil presents an image of primitive rustic simplicity, so that it is difficult for us to imagine that agriculture could ever have been regarded as an expression of man's will to

9 Read, Herbert, *Icon and Idea*. London, Faber & Faber, 1955 [New York, Schocken, 1965]. p. 32.
10 Ibid., p. 26.
11 Coon, Carleton S., *The Hunting Peoples*. Boston, Atlantic, Little-Brown, 1971 [London, Cape, 1972]. p. 116.
12 Ibid., pp. 388-9.
13 Worringer, Wilhelm, *Abstraction and Empathy*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967 [International Universities Press, 1963]. p. 17.
14 Read, Herbert, *op. cit.* p. 41.

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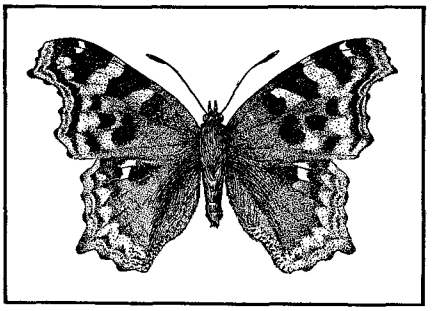
dominate. However, a glance at some of the better-known paradises of man's imagination rapidly convinces one that this is the case, for fantasies in which the human race is supposed to live in peaceful harmony with the environment generally include the abolition of agriculture. The Garden of Eden is not lavishly described in Genesis, but God announces to man that all plants and trees which bear seed are available to him for food. It is only after the Fall that the ground is cursed, that thorns and thistles appear, and cultivation by labor and the sweat of man's brow becomes a necessity. Similarly, when Ovid describes the Golden Age, before Saturn had been displaced by Jupiter, we read that: "The earth itself, without compulsion, untouched by the hoe, unfurrowed by any share, produced all things spontaneously, and men were content with foods that grew without cultivation."[15] Seneca depicts a closely similar Golden Age in which "No labourers ploughed up the soil, nobody was allowed to mark out or divide the ground; when men put everything into a common store, and the earth bore all things more freely because none demanded it."[16] Thus, even the peaceful plowman is seen as performing an aggressive act, an attack upon the earth which should, ideally, be unnecessary if only man lived in the right relation with it. Nowadays, the fantasies of urban man do not generally stretch back so far, and we are content to imagine that life was better when it was more simply rural and agricultural, before the city and the automobile had ruined it. We forget that even the countryside is almost entirely the product of man's interference with Nature, and that "God made the country, and Man made the town" is not only a cliché but a fallacy.

In *New Lives, New Landscapes*, Nan Fairbrother writes: "Nature in a state of total neglect is now rare the world over. Certainly if the only true country is God-made with no help from man, then very few people anywhere in Europe have ever set eyes on the country, and certainly no-one in England. Our countryside was created by farmers as gardens are created by gardeners. 'A masterpiece of produced beauty', so Henry James called it—'The perfection of the rural picturesque.'"[17]

Indeed, we are apt to forget that the pleasure which urban twentieth-century man takes in the countryside, and more especially in mountains and the sea, is a recent phenomenon. In the eighteenth century, mountains were thought of as more terrifying than beautiful. Thus, when Horace Walpole, writing in 1739, describes a journey through the Alps, his correspondent replies: "Your description of the Alps makes me shudder."[18] The poet Gray, writing of his visit to the Grande Chartreuse, says: "There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief without the help of other argument. One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noonday; you have Death perpetually before your eyes, only so far removed as to compose the mind without frighting it . . . Mont Cenis, I confess, carries the permission mountains have of being frightful rather too far."[19] In 1753 E. Rolle writes to Spence: "Indeed, in-



deed, Jo, I should like the Alps very much if it was not for the hills, or as Desdemona loved Othello, I should adore them, if they would not frighten me so with all their beauty and fierceness."[20] Today we should hardly think of Britain's tourist-ridden Lake District as alarming; yet, in 1756, Dr. J. Brown wrote: "The full perfection of Keswick consists of three circumstances, beauty, horror and immensity united."[21] And, in 1773 Dr. Johnson, traveling in North Wales, describes "the extent of its prospects, the awfulness of its shades, the horror of its precipices, the verdure of its hollows and the loftiness of its rocks. The ideas which it forces upon the mind are the sublime, the dreadful, and the vast. Above is inaccessible altitude, below is horrible profundity."[22]

Nor is it only the spectacle of high mountains which makes man feel insignificant and helpless. Forests, too, can be terrifying, and one of the most powerful orchestral pieces of the twentieth century takes its name from Tapio, the forest god of Finnish mythology. As a prefix to the score of "Tapiola" Sibelius puts these lines:

Widespread they stand, the Northland's dusky forests,
Ancient, mysterious, brooding savage dreams,
Within them dwells the Forest's mighty God
And woodsprites in the gloom weave magic secrets.

Attitudes to that other great natural phenomenon, the sea, have varied considerably, for the sea itself varies widely between tempest and calm. Before the eighteenth century, however, the terrors of the sea were more often described than its beauties; some writers carried their dislike of Nature's unruliness to the point of absurdity. In 1689, T. Burnet wrote: "If the sea had been drawn round the earth in regular figures and borders, it might have been a great beauty to our globe . . . What a beautiful Hemisphere [the stars] would have made if they had

15 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Mary M. Innes. Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1955. p. 31-2.
16 Seneca, "*Epistolae Morales. Epistola XC.*" Quoted in Cohn, Norman. *In Pursuit of the Millennium.* London, Secker & Warburg, 1957. pp. 199-200.
17 Fairbrother, Nan, *New Lives, New Landscapes.* London, Architectural Press, 1970 [New York, Knopf, 1970]. pp. 3-4.
18 Carritt, E. F., *A Calendar of British Taste.* London, Routledge. pp. 221.
19 Ibid., p. 220.
20 Ibid., p. 265.
21 Ibid., p. 278.
22 Ibid., p. 347.

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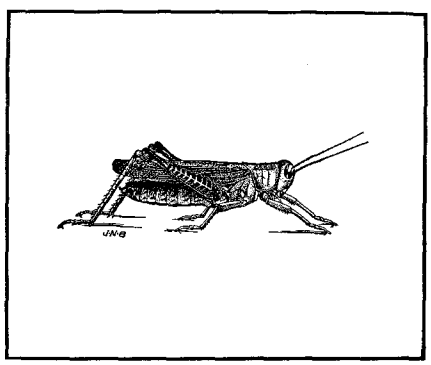
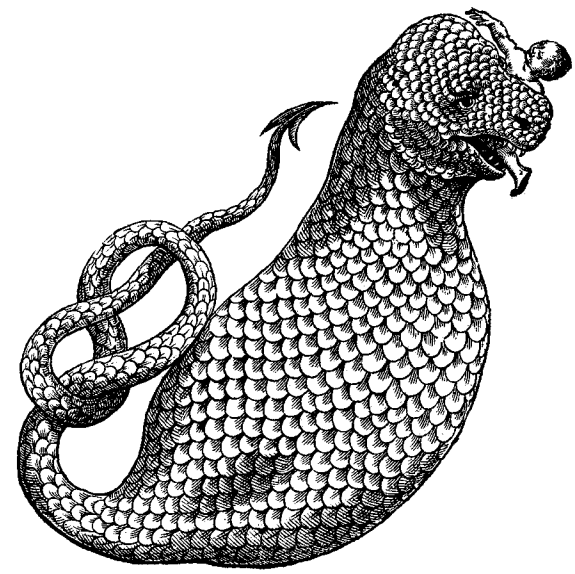
been placed in Rank and Order; if they had been disposed into regular figures . . . according to the rules of Art and Symmetry."[23] It was not until the supposed medical virtues of inhaling "sea air" and even immersing oneself in the waves became fashionable about the middle of the eighteenth century that the Shakespearean image of the "rough, rude sea" was displaced by a new vision of the seaside as a place for health-giving relaxation.

At around the same time, a new attitude toward Nature began to manifest itself in the way in which landowners began to lay out their gardens. Only when man feels that his mastery of Nature is almost complete does he begin to take pleasure in a little highly-modified "wildness". Today, we are apt to find the gardens of Versailles excessively formal and arid; but Louis XIV no doubt regarded those gravelled walks and disciplined shrubs and hedges as evidence of his civilizing power imposed upon the wilderness. In his *English Social History*, G. M. Trevelyan writes: "As far back as the reign of George II, this novel delight and interest felt in the wilder and larger features of landscape had altered the fashion of laying out the 'grounds' of a country house. The formal garden, the walks decorated by leaden statuettes in the Dutch style prevalent under William and Anne, and the yew hedges clipped into fantastic shapes, were swept away in order to bring the grass and trees of the park up to the walls of the manor-house . . . . The abolition of Dutch gardens to make room for grass slopes and trees visible from the windows, testified to the growing delight in natural scenery, which soon led Englishmen to take pleasure even in mountain forms, to flock to the Lake District, and in the following century to the Scottish Highlands and the Alps, hitherto abhorrent to civilized men."



The romantic attitude to Nature, partly inspired by Rousseau, and reaching a high peak in the writings of the Lakeland poets, had begun. But it is important to realize that, even in the late nineteenth century, this attitude was far from universal. Baudelaire "could not endure the Romantic idealization of nature, nor the Rousseau myth of the nobility of natural man, uncorrupted by civilization. He believed, on the contrary, that

23 Ibid., p. 119.
24 Trevelyan, G. M., *English Social History*. London, Longmans, 1948. pp. 401-2.



the only value in man consisted in his spiritual essence, which only self-discipline and self-culture could develop, and that this was of greater price than anything which could be discovered in nature . . ." Baudelaire "tried to put nature in her proper place, for he thought that man lost his pride and dignity by being too humble with her . . . . Nature, he claimed, had no imagination—how boring were her endless green trees and meadows—and he would have liked, for a change, the meadows to be painted red and the trees bright blue." In a letter to Desnoyers in 1855 he writes: " 'You ask me for verses for your little collection, verses about nature, don't you? On the woods, the great oak-trees, on greenery, insects and the sun, no doubt? But you well know that I'm incapable of sentimentalizing over vegetables, and that I'm opposed to this extraordinary new religion which, by its nature, is bound to shock a spiritual being. I'll never be able to believe that the soul of the gods resides in plants, and even were it so, it wouldn't interest me in the slightest, I'd still hold my own soul of higher price than that of these sanctified vegetables. Indeed, I've always thought that there was something distressing and almost vulgar in the eternal reflowering and renewal of nature.' "[25] The attitude that Nature ought always to be improved upon finds another reflection in Baudelaire's championship of *maquillage*, and his fetishistic preference for woman clothed and adorned rather than naked.

The logical consequence of the notion that Nature has to be entirely subdued is total alienation from the natural world—a condition reputedly achieved by the millionaire proprietor of a successful magazine who lives in an environment so artificial that light and dark, and

26 The Book of Isaiah, Ch. XI: 6-9. Authorized Version.

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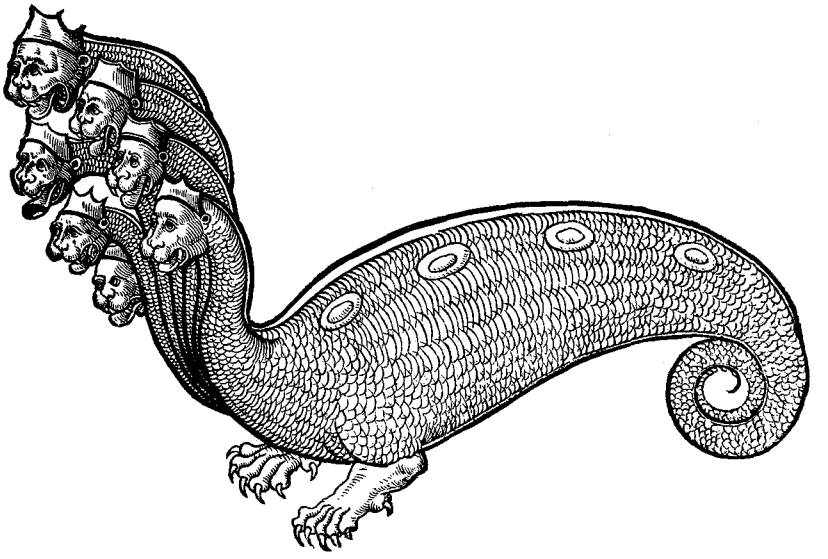

time of day are no longer of interest or importance. Such a life requires the provision of three relays of servants in order that, if he so desires, the master shall be served with breakfast at 7 p.m. or dinner at 4 a.m. With modern methods of communication, there is scarcely any need for the dweller in such an environment ever to emerge into the light of day.

Such extreme absurdities apart, it would of course be facile to dismiss the conquest of Nature as merely an aberration. The same anxiety and sense of insignificance which drives man to dominate is at the root not only of the abstractions of neolithic and later pattern-making, but of the creative achievements of science. As Manuel has shown most clearly in his biography of him, Newton's anxiety and fear in the face of a universe which he found hostile and unpredictable spurred him on to discover the laws which governed the movements of the planets and the earth. As human beings, we are all to varying degree insecure in a universe which is so immensely larger than ourselves; but persons who, like Newton and Descartes, have experienced extreme insecurity or sense of loss in infancy are particularly strongly motivated by a desire to find regularity and predictability. It is not at all absurd to derive much of man's creativity from the prolongation of his infancy and immaturity, which must necessarily leave him with some recollection of a time in which he was indeed entirely helpless.

At the opposite pole to ruthlessness is sentimentality. If Nature is not to be subdued, then man may identify with it, finding echoes of his own moods in Nature's changing aspects, idealizing Nature as maternal goddess, and finally returning to her womb in the embrace of death. Although in one sense man, along with all other living creatures, is part of Nature, the natural order is inevitably a balance of opposing forces, in which living creatures interact with each other and the environment as co-operative opponents. The extreme of Romantic sentiment so identifies man with the natural world that he loses his identity as man and simply becomes merged with what surrounds him. Such an attitude can be just as unrealistic as that which leads to the total subjugation of Nature we have already discussed. Our glance at the Utopian fantasies of Eden and of the Golden Age noted the abolition of agriculture as one prerequisite for harmonious identification of man with Nature. Another is the banishment of predation:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

"And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

"And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den.

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."[26]

To take Isaiah's vision seriously would of course be absurd. The transformation of all carnivores into herbivores would wreak such ecological havoc that it can only be a subject for science fiction. But Isaiah is expressing

25 Starkey, Enid, *Baudelaire*. Harmondsworth, Penguin. pp. 342-3.

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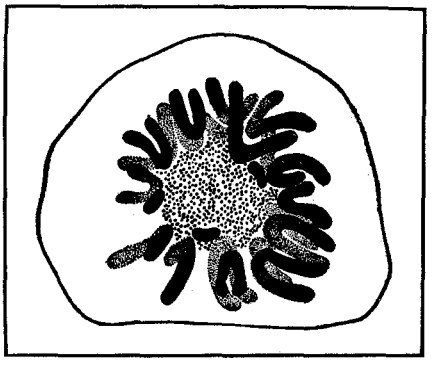
a recurrent wish-fulfilling fantasy of a romantic kind which is so ubiquitous that, partially unconsciously, it does affect our attitude to Nature. We have already drawn attention to Worringer's opposing poles, abstraction and empathy, and discerned that abstraction takes origin from man's fear of Nature, and his need for control and mastery. "The precondition for the urge to empathy is a happy pantheistic relationship of confidence between man and the phenomena of the external world."[27] "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely



and more temperate," is one example of a poet empathizing with Nature, even though he exalts his beloved as being cooler and calmer than the rough winds or the hot sun.

Empathic identification is, however, by no means always a "happy pantheistic relationship of confidence," as Worringer would have it. The Romantic identifies his own moods with what he finds in Nature, attributing rage to the wind or the waves, and finding an analogy between the eruption of a volcano and the release of his own pent-up emotions.

> *O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall*
> *Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap*
> *May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small*
> *Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! Creep,*
> *Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all*
> *Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.*[28]

The poet finds in Nature images which reflect the horror of his own savage melancholia. This is empathy, but empathy with a vengeance: a desperate search for something in Nature which will mirror the sheer frightfulness of the poet's torment. There is comfort in analogy. In finding something outside which matches the turmoil within, one loses some of the dreadful sense of isolation. Indeed, identification with Nature has as its root the same sense of insecurity which drives man to want to dominate it. To merge with Nature is to lose any feeling of being confronted with something alien and greater than oneself which one has to oppose or come to terms with. Giving up the struggle has a fatal attraction for man, who has always to earn his living by the sweat of his brow.

Identification, whether with Nature or with another person, inevitably involves a partial loss of selfhood. The price of no longer confronting the other as a separate individual is loss of autonomy; and the final loss of autonomy is death. What Kenneth Clark called "the malaise of romanticism, the restlessness, the death wish and the worship of ungovernable forces"[29] is what one might call the pathology of empathy. In fact, the romantic notion of being overwhelmed by one's own passions is closely linked with abandoning opposition to Nature and merging with it. Thus Wagner, the archetypal romantic, ends *Tristan and Isolde* with the *'Liebestod'; "In des Welt-Atems-wehanden All-ertrinken-versinken-unbewusst-hochste Lust!"* ("In the universal stream of the world-breath to drown, to founder, unconscious, utmost rapture.") Images of drowning in the universal sea are some of the commonest which express man's wish to lose himself in Nature and his feeling that death is a return to the womb. When Swinburne calls up the image of the "weariest river" winding "somewhere safe to sea", or Tennyson asks that there shall be no moaning of the bar when he "puts out to sea", they are using archetypal imagery which everyone will recognize. It is only in death that man can finally be wholly part of Nature; for life demands that he treat the natural world as something separate from himself, as environment from which he seeks his livelihood, not as maternal sea in which he drowns.

If we are to survive as a species, it is essential that we abandon both ruthlessness and sentimentality in our attitudes to Nature. Our success has come about as a consequence of our ability to detach, abstract, and symbolize; but this achievement has necessarily involved attitudes to Nature which are unrealistic. The hunter-gatherers seem to come nearest to what one might call the right "ethological" attitude to the environment. That is, they treat it with respect, but do not hesitate to make use of it for their own needs, thus achieving a balanced interaction in which both sides can grow and flourish. We cannot regress to an economy like theirs. The change which is necessary in our relationship with nature must come about as the result of conscious deliberation, not as a consequence of artificially adopting hypothetically "primitive" standards. We are most likely to achieve what we want by greatly extending the laws and rules which already are beginning to govern our treatment of nature; and organizations like the World Health Organization or the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations should be striving to formulate principles upon which international agreement can be reached, as has already happened in some limited areas, such as the control of whaling. Non-human nature—whether animal, vegetable or mineral—must be recognized to have rights if humanity is to survive; and, if it is only self-interest which finally dictates that we shall behave better to non-human nature than we have hitherto done, *that* is in accord with the best ethological principles. □

27 Worringer, Wilhelm, *op. cit.* p. 15.

28 Hopkins, Gerard Manley, *Selected Poems and Prose.* W. H. Gardner, ed. Harmondsworth, Penguin. p. 61.

29 Clark, Kenneth, *op. cit.* p. 177.

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William Leiss
THE IMPERIALISM OF HUMAN NEEDS

I.

In human society insatiable desire and the demand for varied means of gratification were traditionally the prerogative of despots. The condition for such desires emerged out of the hierarchical stratification of social classes that is characteristic of the sedentary phase of human development. The social system which made it possible produced a freak of nature — creatures who required calculated stimulation of jaded appetites in order to function. What was least in doubt in such a system was that only a very few were eligible for admission into the banquet where nature's bounty was displayed in ever-changing ways.

Contemporary society claims to have defeated that restriction and has enthroned *as a universal ideal* what I have called the "freak of nature". It has named this creature the *consumer*. "Consumers constantly need new stimulation," writes George Katona, their most assiduous student; "influencing them over the short run may not assure that they remain so stimulated over extensive periods."[1] The cleverest talents are harnessed to a profligate economy determined to prove that this truly democratic ideal can be realized, and that the desperate circumstances of much of the world's population are an unfortunate short-run anomaly. The insatiable consumer of the contemporary industrialized nations — whose "mechanical slaves", we are told, put to shame the ancient despot's bungling and inefficient retinue — is supposedly the prototype of a universal human ideal. All the resources of nature on earth, and if necessary in the depths of space beyond, will be ransacked in the endeavor to create and sustain it.

1 George Katona, "What is Consumer Psychology?" *American Psychologist*, Vol. XXII (1967), p. 226.

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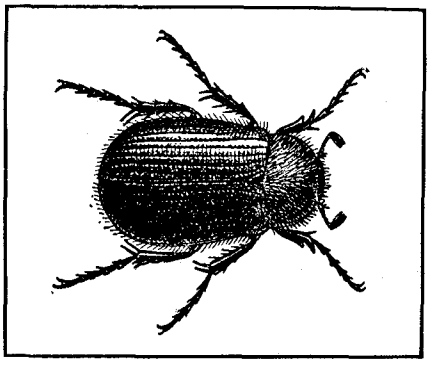
Throughout the sedentary phase of human history the well-being of individuals in small-group settings has been threatened by the pressures of periodic imperialist expansion from the centers of power. To this enduring problem has been added a related one, for now all of non-human nature is endangered by the imperialism of insatiable need proclaimed by the dominant minority of the human species as its ruling principle of behavior.



II.

The entire history of large-scale human settlements during the period which we are wont to call "civilization" has been characterized by relations of domination and subordination, the exploitation of labor, and social stratification. Human civilization as such is virtually conterminous with the existence of the "megamachine" (Lewis Mumford's term) — centralized state power commanding extensive territorial domains and armies of human laborers.[2] Its monuments are the pyramids, palaces, temples, and cathedrals which have been the great repositories of culture. Centralization of power, the operant condition of the megamachine, was inherently expansionist in nature, continually reaching out to plunder and subjugate and absorb whatever existed on its periphery, growing like a malignant cancer until it overreached itself, began to decay from within, and eventually collapsed. According to Toynbee's schema, such has been the fate of twenty out of the twenty-one civilizations that have appeared thus far.

Thus the formation of the great civilizations, which represent the usual conceptual framework for our understanding of human history, has been without exception a process of imperialist aggrandizement. Indeed our very idea of "civilization" is largely a function of the sheer physical dimensions of the cultural monuments which have survived the disintegration of the living social units that conceived them. It is instructive to note that, when referring to the more modest settlements that through accidents of fortune or terrain managed to elude the deadly embrace of the dominant cultures, we normally speak of "primitive societies" rather than "primitive civilizations". To this day the plight of endangered cultural remains from an earlier civilization (for example, flood-damaged medieval and Renaissance art in Florence) evokes a far more sympathetic response than does that of an enduring "primitive" society threatened with calculated extinction (such as the native peoples of the Amazon forest).

Civilization as we have known it *is* imperialist society, the forcible absorption of small communities and diverse cultures into larger, more uniform political units. A population base of a certain size was necessary before an appreciable economic surplus could be accumulated. At a certain point the advantages of centralized control could be compounded, when productivity was such as to make possible the release of armies of laborers from everyday activity — for large-scale irrigation projects, for example, which would increase the extent of cultivation and yield. Most significant of all, perhaps, was the progressive division of labor, the development and perfection of new craft skills devoted to the making of "luxury" items, a development supported by the growing economic surplus. It is not hard to imagine how the "stimulation" of desire, in a class of individuals freed from preoccupation with the necessities of existence, could result in demands for ever more elaborately crafted artifacts.

The cultivated refinement of desire occurred in the context of a two-fold "artificial" separation or estrangement from the ordinary routine of existence. The materials of nature could be enjoyed only after a complicated reworking by human artifice and only to the extent that those who actually produced these delights were denied the use and consumption of them. The refinement of desire occurred, then, in the "free time" available to those whose existence depended on the exploitation of other's labor and who were "insulated" against the conditions experienced by others (the relative harshness of which resulted to a significant degree from these exactions). The concentration of power that made this insularity possible produced a higher degree of irresponsibility and indifference toward the fate of the natural environment and its animal populations as well as to that of the oppressed humans.[3]

This pattern of human development was challenged in the modern period by a truly revolutionary theory and practice affecting the relationship of man and nature. While the older pattern has of course persisted into the present, the new development aims to supersede it, potentially on a global scale. The older design, as we have noted, was based on the imperialist aggrandizement of territory and the command of forced labor; the newer one promises *the satisfaction of infinite human desire for the species as a whole through the conquest of nature.*

2 Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, Vol. I: *Technics and Human Development* (New York: Harcourt, 1967), chapter 9.

3 I do not ignore the fact that certain species of animals may have been hunted to extinction, by small-scale human groups, but — if I understand it correctly — this does not seem to be the general behavior pattern of hunting and gathering societies. See Paul Shepard, *The Tender Carnivore and the Sacred Game* (New York: Scribner's, 1973), Chapter 4. But compare John Livingston, *One Cosmic Instant* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), Ch. 8 (on Pleistocene extinctions).

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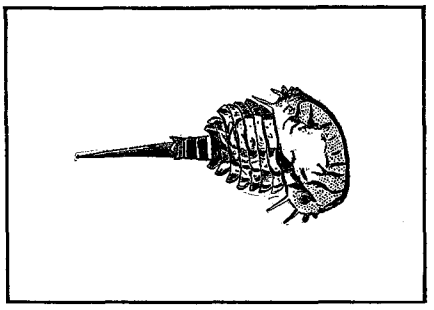

III.

The idea of human domination over nature has become one of the most influential ideologies in the modern world.[4] It has several major component themes, the interrelation of which is the crucial element for the topic under discussion here: (1) the conquest of nature is a *species-project*, thus supposedly overcoming the separation between the favored minority and the oppressed majority in the older pattern; (2) it is made possible by the unique nature of modern science and its special relationship to technological progress; (3) it opens the way to an infinite multiplication of needs and their satisfaction on a universal scale. Underlying these themes and binding them together is a qualitative change in the social perception of nature and its relationship to human activity; in Marx's words, "nature becomes purely an object for men, something merely useful, and is no longer recognized as a power working for itself."[5] Conceived as an eminently humane project for improving dramatically the material fortunes of the species, the conquest of nature has been — by virtue of what I have called "the cunning of unreason" — caught up in a general social crisis which eventually threatens the well-being of all nonhuman nature.

Each of these three themes has a significant bearing on the relation between human and nonhuman nature, and we shall deal with them briefly in turn.

Francis Bacon, whose writings were the catalyst for the development of this ideology, clothed the idea in a humanistic guise and thus provided an auspicious medium for its propagation. He did so by distinguishing three kinds of ambition: personal, national (which is basically the same as what I have referred to as "imperial"), and species ambition. The first he considered as essentially vulgar and unworthy of praise; the second he approved of only with qualifications, for he realized that in most cases it was little else than personal ambition writ large. But the third, he intimated, was "pure", the only form of ambition which we could from an ethical standpoint regard with genuine approbation.

Why? On what grounds should the species-ambition represented in the conquest of nature be accorded this exalted status? Bacon does not address himself directly to this question; but the answer is implied in his argument. Under normal conditions the successes attained as a result of the pursuit of personal or national ambition are necessarily achieved at the expense of other persons or states.[6] The pursuit of self-interest and national interest is, as Bacon understands it, definitely a zero-sum game, and thus the results—precisely insofar as they are fortunate for any of the parties—are morally tainted. In these contexts opposing interests have the same ethical "right", and so it is impossible to plead the cause of one against the other. But where there is no opposing interest at stake, ambition is free to follow its fancy unencumbered by the torments of conscience. The world of nature is this pure field of ambition for Bacon, where aggression can find release without the otherwise inevitable accompaniment of guilt.[7]

In my view, Bacon's brief disquisition on the forms of ambition testifies to his extraordinary prescience in identifying a powerful current in the social psychology of the era to follow. An enormous reservoir of psychic and physical energy could be discharged in the reckless transformation of the environment as the conviction grew that nature was merely the passive, plastic material open to appropriation by a species-ambition free from guilt. Although Bacon and his followers could rely in part upon the heritage of Judaeo-Christian thought, which had assigned the human species a special rank in nature, the new ideology represented a qualitative transformation in the collective consciousness of Western civilization: The novel scientific concept of matter, together with the characterization of animals as machine-like organisms, widened immeasurably the sense of "distance" between human and nonhuman nature.[8] Bacon could

4 A critical study of it is undertaken in my book, *The Domination of Nature* (New York: Braziller, 1972). The references to Francis Bacon's work in the following paragraphs are based upon the more extensive discussion in Chapter 3 of this book.

5 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, tr. Martin Nicolaus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 410. The point is not that nature becomes an object for man for the first time, but that it is regarded as *nothing else* than an object; an accumulation of quantitative steps results in a qualitative change.

6 This is strongly implied in at least one passage: *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, ed. B. Farrington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 92 (cited in *The Domination of Nature*, p. 50).

7 See *The Domination of Nature*, p. 60. John Rodman cites the remark of Descartes that the conception of animal automatism enabled man to kill animals without guilt: "The Dolphin Papers," *The North American Review* (Spring 1974). This social-psychological strain is found later on in the famous essay by William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War": Aggressive drives which traditionally found an outlet in warfare were to be sublimated through a period of arduous manual labor required of all young men, who would have thereby "done their own part in the immemorial human warfare against nature." William James, *Memories and Studies* (London: Longmans, 1912), p. 291. Nonhuman nature would pay the price for peace and serenity in human society.

8 Rodman, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-25, emphasizes the medieval origins of the beast-machine idea. An important topic for further discussion is to evaluate the significance of the seventeenth-century developments. One suggestion is that their chief

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find a source of guiltless ambition in the projected conquest of nature only because he was willing to assume *a priori* that there was no opposing "interest" in the sphere of nonhuman nature. Perhaps he could not have foreseen that the attempt was doomed to failure from the start, that inevitably the avarice, cruelty, and ugliness inherent in this ambition would not be absorbed and disappear in the endeavor (as is implied), but rather would be necessarily reflected and embodied in the transformed environment.

The second of the three interrelated themes concerns the nature of the "conquest" anticipated by Bacon and the means whereby it was to be accomplished. The special character of modern science and its dynamic interaction with technology was to result in *power over* nature for the human species. This formulation was paradoxical, since nature is obviously the source of whatever energies are utilized by human action. Bacon admitted the paradox, of course, often repeating the slogan that "we command nature by obeying her"; in other words, by discovering the underlying mechanisms of energy transfer in nature, human artifice can apply the energy to the production of desired goods. It is understandable that the paradox would be ignored and that this process would be interpreted for practical purposes as the augmentation of human power and the human ability to alter the environment. In fact it was ignored until quite recently, until the realization dawned that the command and utilization of nature's vast stores of "power" (energy) had unforeseen consequences of equally vast dimensions, particularly the difficult problems associated with the release of heat.[9]

In the light of these factors the critical evaluation of the phraseology employed in the notion that the species achieves power *over* nature through modern science and technology represents more than an idle terminological quibble. An examination of Bacon's writings shows that the imagery represented in this notion was cast in the all-too-familiar mold of traditional political experience and again expressed vividly a new sense of distance between man and the rest of nature. The image recalled the most despotic of relationships, that of master and slave, and with the bravado of an innocent Bacon did not hesitate to apply it cheerfully in this new context.[10] The radical element of irresponsibility that characterizes this situation is one of its most significant features, and in employing this terminology Bacon and the legions who followed him revealed another crucial aspect of the new consciousness toward nonhuman nature.

The image of despotic power befits the organism (individual or collective) whose will is unhindered by any effective opposition; thus this image is appropriate for the kind of species-ambition discussed earlier. To date it has not been effectively challenged. The environmental constraint mentioned above may represent just such a challenge, although we are accustomed to the message that there are no barriers to the ingenuity of our science and technology. We cannot yet arrive at a reliable judgment on the question of whether there is an insurmountable constraint on the quantity of energy that the human species can utilize; at any rate the dominant minority may very well be willing to tempt fate in this matter. The belief that the progress of science and technology represents an inexorable augmentation of our power over nature remains a supreme article of faith for many persons, and the corollary of this belief is the expectation that the power thus attained is the foundation for the infinite expansion of human wants.

The idea that scarcity — the lack of sufficient material provisions to supply the needs of all individuals — has plagued human society since its origins is one of the central tenets of our current social catechism. Unfortunately, too extensive a digression would be required to comment adequately on it here.[11] It is relevant to our preceding analysis, however, inasmuch as the overcoming of scarcity and its attendant social conflict would be the most dramatic benefit derived from the conquest of nature, according to Bacon's schema. The presumed niggardliness of the natural environment, its inadequate provision for human wants, was alleged to be the source of the instability of society and the internecine battle over the share of spoils that threatened the fabric of civility. Rather than attempting to uncover the true sources of the artificially-induced sense of scarcity where they are in fact located, namely *in the structure of social relations*, the most influential thinkers of the early modern period sought to convince their audience that the way to the gratification of desire without limit had been found. The mastery over nature would make possible an "infinity of arts and crafts" (Descartes) to satisfy an infinity of wants.

The one outstanding dissenter was Thomas More. In his *Utopia* the fundamental tenet was that universal human well-being was attainable in a social setting where material wants were deliberately restricted according to a "reasonable" scale of satisfaction. But More's sixteenth-century vision was ill-suited to the emerging social formation which C. B. Macpherson has called the "possessive market society." Hobbes's social psychology, which postulated in the individual a "ceaseless striving of power after power which ceaseth only in death," laid the foundations for the ideology of infinite expansion of wants

significance lay in the *total* conception of a mechanistic nature which absorbed and "operationalized" earlier ideas (such as the beast-machine) that had lain dormant, so to speak. On the general theme of the conceptual "separation" of man and nature see Livingston, *One Cosmic Instant*.

9 This point has been stressed by Robert Heilbroner, "The Human Prospect," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. XX, nos. 21-22 (24 Jan. 1974), p. 25.

10 *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon, op. cit.*, p. 62 (cf. *The Domination of Nature*, p. 55).

11 For some suggestions on this point see Philip Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), pp. 103 ff. and Barrington Moore, Jr., "The Society Nobody Wants," in *The Critical Spirit*, ed. B. Moore and K. Wolff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 401-418.

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that was orchestrated in the works of the political economists.[12] Implicit in the ideology was a conception of the interconnections among human need, human labor, and nature's resources; the chapter "Of Property" in John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* is a superb example of it. The key concept is *value*, and things have value only to the degree to which human labor has been "mixed" with natural objects: The acorn on the ground acquires value when it has been picked up. But nature itself initially represents a barrier to the accumulation of value, in that goods acquired or produced in excess of relatively short-term need would spoil. Human ingenuity triumphs over nature with the invention of money, which does not spoil, and the ethical injunction against accumulating more than one can use (since it would be wasted through spoilage) is inapplicable. The way is open to refine the art of stimulating desire.

The crucial element in Locke's imaginative portrayal of human development is the justification of a social mechanism which allows individuals access to future enjoyment of an unspecified kind, unrelated to immediate need. His goal is to deduce the right of property; to the extent that he succeeds in doing so, he denotes the very essence of property as that appropriation of nature not directly related to need, or as appropriation undertaken in anticipation of needs not presently apparent but which may be experienced in the future. Property may be characterized simply as a permanent form of the anticipation of scarcity; the internal dynamic of property accumulation consists in the fact that its very existence calls into being new wants (which are in essence the impermanent form of socially-created scarcity). requiring for their satisfaction an expansion of the productive apparatus and thus an increase in property.

What traditionally limited the inherent upward spiral of property and new wants were the necessities imposed by the system of domination. The maintenance of feudal social relations, for example, depended upon the predominance of a particular form of property (landed estates) which in itself imposed limits on the potential range of expanding needs. The ideology of the conquest of nature, with its hope of a dramatic change in the level of human gratification, arose simultaneously with a novel conception of social authority based on the social contract theory. This theory presupposed a radical equality among all individuals and derived the principle of authority from the doctrines of consent and inalienable rights. The notions of universal consent and equality of human rights implied in effect the absence of domination in society; but what is strongly suggested in the notion of conquering nature is that the overcoming of domination in society would be made possible by the achievement of domination over nature. The social theory of the modern period never achieved a sufficient degree of self-clarification to acknowledge the internal connection between these two processes, but I think that the actual record of subsequent events allows us to infer that they have indeed been closely related.

Elsewhere I have advanced the hypothesis that the idea of human domination over nature could become a significant social ideology only in a social framework which explicitly rejects all "naturalistic" justifications for authority, *i.e.*, all claims to rule based on inherited privilege.[13] These traditional justifications are replaced by a conception of "rational" authority, the important characteristic of which is that there be no formal (legal) barriers to the free and equal pursuit of individual self-interest. Of course substantial inequality of condition and inherited privilege do remain, despite the fact that no claim to authority based on them can be officially recognized (equality of right and franchise remains the basic legal principle). What can sustain the principle of equality in the setting of enduring real inequality, I would argue, is the expectation of a continual, general rise in the level of material satisfaction for the population as a whole. "Economic progress", whether real or fanciful, has become the basic principle of legitimacy for every modern society, the underlying social "cement" that has replaced the caste categories of earlier times, applying in equal measure to democratic and nondemocratic political arrangements. The idea of "zero growth" or even "limits to growth" strikes terror into the heart of the most "affluent" society, precisely because it is not merely a question of economic ideology, but rather one which affects the central principle of social and political legitimacy.

For modern society economic progress is inseparable from scientific and technological progress — that is, the conquest of nature. The link between them has formed gradually since the seventeenth century, when the propagandists for the idea of human mastery over nature intimated that the unfettered growth of science and technology could pay the bill for insatiable desire on a universal scale. The monumental irony hidden in their call to action eluded them, as it has eluded the consciousness of every succeeding age down to our own. For insatiable desire is the hallmark of a creature that has self-consciously abandoned the attempt to exercise any rational control over its behavior — and yet it is just this creature which simultaneously announces its intention to subject all of nonhuman nature to its unchallengeable control through its very rational science and technology! We are told that the infinite expansion of material wants is a part of our nature, that our economic behavior is structured according to human nature, thus that — to rephrase the point in an admittedly distasteful way — in accepting the postulate of human insatiability we are *submitting to (our) nature*. A peculiar endeavor, is it not, for the species which strives so mightily to dominate nature? Are we to believe that the gigantic enterprise upon which modern society has embarked resolves itself into a conundrum? That the reason for pursuing human control over all of nonhuman nature is to enable us to

12 See C. B. Macpherson, The *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

13 *The Domination of Nature*, pp. 180-187.

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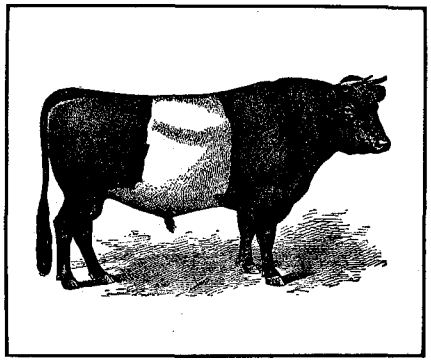
abandon control over our own nature, so that it alone of all existing things is "free"?



IV.

The doctrine of human insatiability involves a structural relationship between human and nonhuman nature which can be characterized as the imperialism of human needs. Human nature would be understood as in itself a state of radical, irreducible "want", "lack", or "deficiency".[14] Its uninhibited self-expression would result in the reduction of all else to the status of a means — but (what is worse) a means to an end so obscure that it could not even be conceptualized. What we encounter at this level of analysis is not just the judgment that the world of nonhuman nature has no *value* "in itself", apart from its forced service in the inexorable expansion of human material wants, but that it possesses no *reality* apart from our orientation to it as a fundamentally undifferentiated "field". If this were the case, the orientation itself would be an insoluble mystery, since as the sole dimension of "reality" it would have no referent, no "other" in relation to which it could be comprehended.

We may be able to achieve some clarification of the problem encountered here if we "suspend" the ontological question and focus our attention on the more mundane categories of political economy. For over a century the doctrine of insatiability has functioned as an indispensable postulate for the science of economics, lately appearing with monotonous regularity in the prefatory sections of textbooks. As a postulate it is entitled to claim exemption from the rigors of demonstration, although by what means it achieved this exalted status is no easy matter to determine: The origins of privilege, in ideas as in other realms, are shrouded in obscurity. One representative sample from a contemporary source will suffice here: "For all practical purposes, human wants may be regarded as limitless. An occasional individual may have everything he wants, but man's capacity to generate new wants as fast as he satisfies old ones is well-known psychologically" [*sic*]. [15]

The idea of insatiability itself is very old. Its classical formulation occurs in the second book of Plato's *Republic*; and this formulation is of great significance for the contemporary issue which we are discussing, because Plato argues that human society as such is based upon the inherent complexity and multiplicity of human wants. This is the origin of the division of labor and exchange, which in reciprocal relation to the complexity of wants results in the upward spiral of production and consumption. In the course of the dialogue, Socrates suggests that this spiral should level off at some generally reasonable level of satisfaction, and he calls this a "healthy" society (Thomas More argues the same case much later, as I have noted above). But he acknowledges that many persons will not be content at this level and will demand "luxurious" refinements of satisfactions, propelling the spiral upward. The consequences will be, according to Socrates, an "unhealthy" state, an inevitable search for greater sources of satisfaction beyond the boundaries of the particular society — that is to say, the inevitable consequences will be aggression, imperialism, and war.[16]

In the ideal form of society sketched in the *Republic*, Plato attempted to undermine this tendency by vesting control over social development in the hands of a ruling élite which could maintain the society in a "healthy" condition precisely because it endured a self-imposed spartan regime, denying itself participation in the accumulation of property and the refinements of desire. This ideal, however "impractical" it might seem, reflects Plato's awareness of the dangers inherent in the expanding realm of production and consumption. The modern purveyors of our economic wisdom remain blissfully and willfully ignorant of them. The unanimous endorsement of the postulate of insatiability in their economic theory corresponds to the dominant social practice wherein steady economic growth functions as the basic principle of legitimacy for the entire social system. No "healthy" limit is recognized in theory, and in practice the colossal expansion of production unleashed through the applications of modern science and technology has shifted the problem itself far beyond the dimensions understood by Plato.

The new dimensions of the problem are of truly staggering proportions. If Plato is correct — and I think that he is — then a powerful tendency toward the infinite expansion of wants inheres in the very nature of "civilized" human society. And the ingenuity of that great, interlocking triumvirate of modern society — industry, science, and technology — has shifted that tendency to the center of our social concerns. Under the impact of this shift all elements of the self-generating reality of nonhuman nature, that is, its subsistence as a mode of reality independent of human desire and need, tend to be dissolved. Thus a thorough critique of the theory and practice of human insatiability, as well as an exploration

14 Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* represents the ontological condition of human existence in these terms. See Herbert Marcuse, "Sartre's Existentialism," *Studies in Critical Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), esp. p. 166.

15 R. Lipsey, G. Sparks, and P. Steiner, *Economics* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 5.

16 *Republic*, 369b-373c; *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (New York: Pantheon, 1961), pp. 615-620.

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of the possibilities for transcending it, is one of our most urgent tasks.[17]

The first sentence in the passage from the recent economics textbook quoted above reads: "For all practical purposes, human wants may be regarded as limitless." The initial phrase is crucial and provides a clue for our critique. This is (allegedly) a *practical* postulate, that is to say, a supposition which is useful for the attempt by a particular scientific discipline to explain the underlying structural dynamics of a certain kind of social behavior. The truth or falsehood of the idea of insatiability itself is simply not in question here. Since the postulate does not pretend to refer to a "real" or "actual" state of affairs, but only represents a plausible interpretation of what is apparently the case, nothing would be gained by attempting to deny its claim — *i.e.*, by asserting that human wants are *not* insatiable. The theory of modern economics never tried to *prove* that human wants either are or are not insatiable; what it did endeavor to do was to explicate (through the theory of marginal utility and other conceptions) the morphology of a social practice based on the assumption that wants are limitless. More precisely: A social practice which more and more self-consciously *channels human interaction in ways that lead individuals to believe that their material needs are insatiable.*

A social system whose principle of legitimacy is the eternally-enlarging cycle of production and consumption *must* encourage individuals to behave *as if* their material wants were potentially infinite. This process has two principal aspects. First, the satiation of desire must be structured in such a way as to insure that inherent in the very act of gratification itself is the seed and stimulus of new desire. And second, the psychic energies of individuals must be shaped so that needs and impulses which are non-material in themselves (love, security, privacy, freedom) are directed toward material objects; in other words, the social process seeks to "bind" these energies to mass-produced goods and to encourage the belief that these desires can be satisfied through the purchase of commodities.[18] These two aspects are operative to some extent in an exchange economy at all levels of production and become the predominant feature of consumption at the higher levels.[19] As interacting elements of a unified process they have the effect of provoking dissatisfaction with every concrete act of gratification, since the desire itself has been elicited by, and deflected toward, a material object which is at best only partially appropriate for it. The non-material desire is fragmented into a potentially infinite range of discrete components which are then identified with an ever-expanding range of commodities — for example, the desire of an individual for personal respect from others is fragmented and then routed through a vast array of "personal grooming aids" by means of which the individual supposedly becomes more pleasing to others. Interpersonal respect thus becomes a scarce resource that can only be appropriated through a fortunate selection and combination of the newest items in the marketplace.

In general, then, the phenomenon of insatiability represents the momentary, fluctuating assortment of *socially-induced sensations of scarcity*. The predominant place it

17 Only a few elements of such a critique can be indicated here. I am developing it more fully in a work in progress, tentatively entitled "Needs and Commodities: An Essay on the Possibilities of Human Satisfaction."

18 Obviously what I have referred to as "non-material" needs are *related to* forms of material well-being; the formulation in the text does not do justice to the complexity of the matter, which will be explored in the fuller study in progress.

19 Marx recognized it at work in nineteenth-century capitalism: ". . . . each capitalist does demand that his workers should save, but only *his own*, because they stand toward him as workers; but by no means the remaining *world of workers*, for these stand towards him as consumers. In spite of all 'pious' speeches he therefore searches for means to spur them on to consumption, to give his wares new charms, to inspire them with new needs by constant chatter, etc." *Grundrisse*, *op. cit.*, p. 287 (italics in original).

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now occupies in social relations is a critical problem for the future of advanced capitalist society, as well as for at least two significant variations of socialist society: the centrally-planned economy of the Soviet Union and the decentralized "consumer socialism" of Yugoslavia. Its human consequences in all those settings are potentially disastrous; Plato had indicated some of the grounds for this judgment long ago, but the massive productive and destructive capabilities of modern society have increased the stakes in this game immeasurably. No less disastrous are its implications for the fate of nonhuman nature.

There are many ramifications to this latter dimension of the problem. I would like to select two for purposes of illustration here, namely the incorporation of "wilderness" within the ambit of human consumption and the "industrialization" of domesticated animal production.

In *Desert Solitaire* Edward Abbey recounts the dismal stages whereby an extensive tract of desert parkland was made accessible to the devotees of mechanized pleasure. In accordance with a pattern that was to be followed all over North America, paved roads were extended into areas where previously motorized transport had been hazardous, if possible at all. In the earlier arrangement, the wilderness represented a part of nature that was required to endure only an insignificant degree of human use and thus was open to a qualitatively different order of experience for those few who sought it. An aspect (incomplete, to be sure) of "independence" from human use was preserved. The introduction of the paved roads spelled its doom, for on them arrived not only the regular paraphernalia of settled life, but a host of specially-designed devices, consummated in the self-propelled "camper" vehicles, that testified to a renewed orgy of consumption by a grateful populace. This growing inability to experience any aspect of nature except by a process of mediation through manufactured objects is, I believe, a response to a subconscious feeling that whatever remains outside the vortex of consumption represents a *threat* — specifically, the threat of a *different order of gratification*, unrelated to the economic sphere. This subconscious fear feeds upon the radical, inherent incompleteness of satisfaction discussed earlier; the world of nonhuman nature pays the price for our failure to understand the real structure of our needs.

To turn to our second example: The traditional human use of domesticated animals has undergone recently a qualitative transformation with the introduction of "industrialized" processes — mechanized feeding, restriction of movement, hormonal manipulation, and so forth.[20] In the routinized life cycles of the creatures whose flesh we "need" for the diet that is destroying our health we can detect the mirror image of the progressive routinization of human life. Their condition is an anticipation of the behavioral controls that will be proposed for human populations in the foreseeable future. And the remnants of the wild animal populations, which have acknowledged their uselessness — and forfeited their right to existence — in their incapacity to breed well in captivity, may be joined by a few human escapees from the regimented pleasures of civilized society.

The technological ingenuity of the presently dominant minority of the human species is sufficiently potent to accomplish large-scale modifications in the environment and, for the time being, to convert the globe into a breeding-farm for mankind. But there is at least one unpleasant consequence that no amount of ingenuity can overcome: The "artificial" environment created under the aegis of uncontrolled human avarice will faithfully reflect the character of that drive. The world of nonhuman nature cannot absorb indefinitely the self-destructive energies unleashed by the dialectic of socially-created scarcity in human civilization. The impressive achievements of great cultures just barely conceal the foundation of general ugliness and unnecessary cruelties upon which they are erected. The refinements of material wants are the pathetic diversions designed to sustain the illusion of "progress".

There is in this perspective no hint of a golden age of human development to which we might "return", for the structural elements of our present dilemma are nothing else than the lineaments of human civilization itself. Under the relentless pressure of large-scale human organization the older alternatives have atrophied. We must locate and nourish the possible elements of transcendence, however frail they may appear at present, that exist within the societies now enraptured by the mirage of a happiness based on the stimulation of infinite material want. If they can be wooed from that mirage, a qualitatively different form of society might gain a chance to take root and blossom. This society would, eventually on a global scale, impose upon itself drastic limitations on the material needs and the numbers of its human constituents, thereby allowing the world of nonhuman nature a generous space in which to run its course largely unhindered.[21] By stilling the strident claims of homocentric desire, an "openness" to the rest of nature might be allowed to emerge, a form of experience in which "being needed by" became the correlate of "need". This would be a self-conscious acknowledgement of the interdependence of nature and would replace the perverted unidirectional thrust of human want that reigns today.

Only in such a setting is it conceivable that human consciousness might succeed in its highest endeavor: to be at peace with itself by understanding its place in nature. Might we presume that this is in part the nonanthropocentric framework that we now seek, that the "interest" of the totality of nature — insofar as we can ever apprehend this interest — is respected in it? □

20 See Peter Singer, "Animal Liberation," *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. XX, No. 5 (April 5, 1973), pp. 19ff.

21 The same suggestion has been made in a related context by Christopher Stone, "Should Trees have Standing?—Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects," 45 *Southern California Law Review* 450 (1972), at 492.

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Paul Shepard
ANIMAL RIGHTS AND HUMAN RITES

A progressive march of civil justice over the past two centuries is the historic setting within which blacks, women, and lately 18-year-olds, have been in part elevated in political power and social status. Whole nations and economic classes composing a "third world", usually identified by a non-industrial economy, are now popularly regarded as unjustly deprived. The implication seems to be that powerful nations are economically obligated to satisfy the right to be rich and, implicitly, to be free. Meanwhile the egalitarian flood reached out to orphans, working children, infants, idiots, and cripples. Then, with the humanitarian movement of the last century spilling over, it came to the protection of domestic animals — a kind of 4th world — invoking in their name the right not to be overworked, tortured or abandoned.

The movement for the rights of animals and plants would seem, therefore, to be an extension of legal means of civilization. The question is now whether the furthering of an ethical relationship to animals can indeed come as an *extension* of the idea of human rights. Is a civil and legal foundation derived from several millennia of purely human politics a sound basis for ecological justice? If not, what is the context of such an ethic?

Today's concern for the well-being of animals in zoos and medical laboratories is a further unfolding of the defense of homeless dogs and cats. It is typical of this protective attitude toward animals to be yoked to the theme of poor housing: the condition of caged animals, and finding homes for strays. There is something about the "homelessness" of wild animals that obsesses humanitarians. For them a bird's nest is obviously its home and even a hole in the ground is better than no roof over one's head. This fixation on shelter plays into the hands of such enterprises as the logging and paper industries whose re-seeding of the plains of their disasters is publicly described as "creating a home" for wildlife. Like anti-litter and beautification themes, such propagandist lullabies are the tunes to which protective associations find themselves swaying if not dancing.

It also has an Oriental expression, a logic by which rights of creatures, so frustrating in their semantic and practical aspects, can be serenely refined to the purity of non-killing. A recent exponent of this view was Albert Schweitzer, who, combining St. Augustine with Hindu Jainism, was devoted to the protection from death or injury of all life however minute or inconspicuous.[1] Schweitzer's "reverence for life" was an endless chain of excruciating decisions in all things medical and horticultural. His unshakable conviction of the rights of life over death and of the priority of human value did not mitigate his somber sense of judgement and responsibility. For him, too, the care of life was associated with giving shelter. He kept captive a small menagerie of wild

1 See Albert Schweitzer, *Philosophy of Civilization*, Vol. 2, *Civilization and Ethics* (London: Black, 1923); *Out of My Life and Thought* (New York: Holt, 1933). Also, *The Animal World of Albert Schweitzer*, ed. and tr. C. R. Joy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951).

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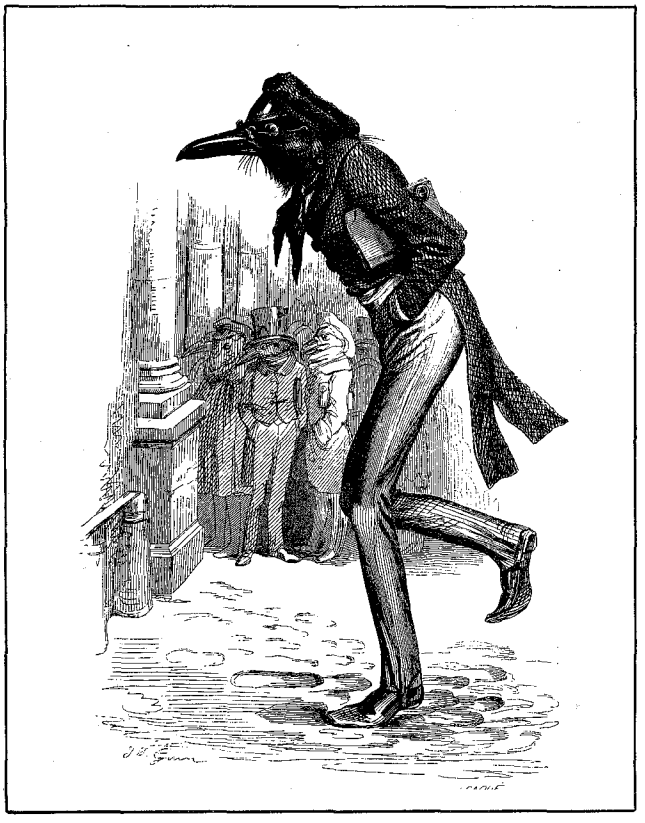
animals so that he could admire them. As among all wild captives made into pets, these animals were amputated from their gene pool, and from fellow creatures and habitat; no amount of loving care could prevent them from becoming neurotic and flabby monsters.

Schweitzer's impulse to "extend to all life that respect which we have for our own," however much influenced by Eastern thought, is clearly related to Western humanitarian social justice. It was a part of the colonial mind, a kind of obligation to those "less fortunate" in a scale where rank is confirmed as much by responsibility as privilege. Charity has always had something of the readiness to be resigned to a *status quo*. That the relationship between non-human species should require human intervention, though as old as the "dominion" precepts in Genesis, could only be acted upon by those who knew themselves to be the instruments of God's will. Even so, Schweitzer is no exception to the general sense of alienation that preoccupied European philosophy and literature at the time, for it was a strategy in which humanism and technology combined to prove human transcendence.

Like all ideologies, this attitude could perceive ecological conflict as an uncompromising *Us* or *Them*. The consequences are either exile or sanctuary. As any naturalist knows, there is a widespread general assumption that any wild creature which is no longer found here has simply gone somewhere else. The popular discovery of the migration of birds had the unfortunate effect of seeming to support the notion of a kind of infinite mobility. It took half a century to convince duck hunters that the ducks which no longer came south no longer existed.



The concept of sanctuary is more interesting, for it is no mere illusion. It is the only humanitarian "solution" available to the ideological imagination. The American Indian and the American bison thus went onto reservations at the same time. The idea has the merit that it recognizes the multiplicity of factors necessary for life and treats survival as populations instead of individuals. Continued existence demands a space, geography, or habitat, which cannot be fully described and is not known. We now have whooping crane sanctuaries, condor sanctuaries, black-footed ferret sanctuaries. In New Zealand I have seen a frog sanctuary, all the known individuals of which live on a single rocky ridge no bigger than a football field.

Most such protected space is "set aside" for relic populations of certain endangered species. Reservations are a kind of reprieve for those creatures whose range and number have so shrunk that they are in danger of becoming extinct, a last minute commutation from a death sentence to a life term. Or, in a political idiom, we may imagine all survivors of such minorities transplanted to a new state. Sanctuaries are also likened to museums established by patronizing largesse for the edification and amusement of visitors.

The example of the sanctuary for frogs points up the inevitable problem in a world of two million species. Scores of species of molluscs and freshwater fish are either endangered or already extinct. The TVA alone accounted for several species of snails. No one knows of these — or cares — except a few naturalists. It is obviously impossible to establish a sanctuary for every creature which must soon face that ultimate ideological moment. Such will not be necessary. The humanitarian jury has an ancient Chain of Being etched in its conscience. "Worthy" species can thus be chosen, and it is not likely that we will go much "below" frogs.

If the theme of sanctuary were actually followed to its logical end, with every endangered species in turn granted its own reservation, the spaces would gradually coalesce until the whole planet was a sanctuary. Not a bad idea, perhaps. But this cannot happen because the concept is a political solution to 19th century problems when space was still unlimited. In evolutionary terms this unfeasible arrangement could be described as allopatric — the simultaneous life of potentially conflicting species by geographic separation. Extinction, exile (as extirpation), and sanctuary are the allopatric choices in man's cohabitation of the earth with other life.

Allopatry is consistent with our traditions of personal property, the model of the nation state, the philosophy of the domination of nature, and even with industrial growthmania up to a point. The alternative is sympatry, or living together. One form is captivity for the non-human, which is an indirect form of its destruction as a species. We are nearly without the cultural rudiments of an ecological ethic based on sympatry. Only the Peaceable Kingdom offers an image of that halcyon state. Unfortunately it refers to no creatures that we know. Although depicted with the outlines of lions and lambs, the

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inhabitants of that mythical garden have no other resemblance to life.

There are some unchosen sympatric symbiotic forms. The dooryard birds, weeds of the lawn, roaches, fleas, house mice — a few dozen stowaways in the wheelhouses and holds of spaceship earth. It is a sparse fauna and flora, to which the pests and diseases of mankind may be added as species in their own right. Though wild in the true genetic sense in which domesticates are not, they are relatively unimportant to the larger question. That both vegetarian and other ethical non-killing philosophies are exercised primarily on these urban fellow travellers and domesticated animals is indicative of the irrelevance of the creatures and the practices. Extinction has almost nothing to do with direct killing (with some exceptions, such as whales). The preoccupation with not killing houseflies is like a narcotic. Whole realms of life are swept away while devotees bicker over the sanitation of zoos and zealots gingerly move each ant from the sidewalk. It is almost as though some devil had provided this homely assembly of houseflies and milk goats to divert us.

Our society has hardly begun to address the question of sharing the land with competitors, predators, parasites, and with those forms so little threatening and so fragile that special care is needed to prevent their inadvertent destruction. The scientific evidence, good as it is, cannot guide us to economic decisions affecting all daily contacts with a million species or with the environments on which they depend. The situation is illustrated by the self-serving argument of chemical pesticide industries against restrictions: "Get all the evidence before you make a decision." — a provision that would postpone regulation indefinitely. For the same reason — that we do not know all the details of all the niches of all creatures — the concept of rights (at least as conventionally conceived) cannot be applied. We do not in fact know what must be done to assure the most elementary right of survival of more than a few hundred species.

Something much more pragmatic than economics or quasi-political rights is called for: procedures which keep our connectedness with all life before us, even though we don't know how the connections work. Indeed, certain universal elements of ecological systems might be taken as representing the whole. I have in mind food chains. In contrast to the ethical-humanitarian canon of no killing, the food chain or trophic-ecological approach would be to emphasize the centrality of predation. The humanitarian's projection onto nature of illegal murder and the rights of civilized people to safety not only misses the point but is exactly contrary to fundamental ecological reality: the structure of nature is a sequence of killings. Part of the "moral" difficulty of accepting this criterion is that it is overlaid with the overwhelming fact of the murder of some seventy million people between 1913 and 1946. The notion of deliberately linking such a dangerous "blood lust" into an active philosophy of nature must surely on its surface seem monstrous. There will be no alternative but to begin at the beginning, to examine the nature of war as part of the politics of the members of a single species and the nature of predation as a wholly different matter.

The Cynegetic Sensibility

Have men ever lived by a code of interspecies killing who do not kill one another? If so — and I believe that the evidence is strong for such peoples, both in our past and among living hunter-gatherers — what can it signify for us? Admittedly, at this point it can do no more than to signal a hopeful surface. We must unravel the so-called "primitive" one step at a time, peeling back the alternate layers of anthropological fact and cultural lies, hoping that illumination from a time and a way of life to which we cannot literally return will shine upon us.

Not only are war and murder rare, but among those killers of animals, whose lives were a perpetual celebration of food chains, there was and is disinclination to maximize. The jaw of the economist in us falls open; here were and are people who did not take more when there was more for the taking. No wonder the 19th century regarded the "savage" as having a "lack of drive", "deficient intelligence", or "physical apathy". It was as incomprehensible as the notion that such low matters as killing and eating can be close to the center of any kind of ethical system.

Apprehension of connectedness to nature is precisely the weakness of Western ethics. Marriage and diet are the universal means and symbols of relationship. It is just in the matter of food chains in nature that the

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cynegetic (hunting/gathering) mind excels. For us, animals in general constitute a vague Other; we are reminded throughout our lives of the many distinctions between us and them. It is extremely difficult to recast that whole assumption, to break out of our own culture by an act of will, to see the others as a myriad of beings, the differences among which are on a plane with the differences between us and any one kind of them. In the cynegetic view the world is an exquisitely elaborated comity laced through with eating habits, the most conspicuous and important threads of connection and significance. When one senses, however momentarily, that experience of a world of beings which it produces, the loneliness of modern men can be seen as an ecological as much as a social phenomenon. No one could be lonely in a world so richly populated.

For hunters, that tapestry is a hieroglyph in which the patterns of eater and eaten are the principal figures. The terms of this communication are species, and the grammar their habits. The extensive knowledge among hunting peoples the world around has astonished ethnologists for generations. That the Fang of the Gabon, the Hanunoo of the Philippines, the San of the Kalihari, and dozens of other peoples have plant and animal taxonomies numbering in the hundreds and even thousands was merely one of those irrelevant (or merely "practical") but irritatingly ubiquitous facts until this knowledge was related to 1) the individual development of cognition, and 2) the mosaic reference for totemic metaphor by way of an accompanying natural history. "The diversity of species furnishes man with the most intuitive picture at his disposal and constitutes the most direct manifestation he can perceive of the ultimate discontinuity of reality," comments Levi-Strauss.[2] But the infinite discontinuity is not a fragmentation, because of the natural history; the myriad forms are connected up by food chains, learned as the nomenclature is learned. Only continuity as patterns of a flow relationship save the necessary refinement of perception from becoming a nightmare of pulverized otherness.

That we academics today scorn the memorizing of names reflects our culture's contempt for nature. As Victor Shelford and other fathers of American ecology discovered in the nineteen-twenties, the study of the dynamic life of natural communities had to wait on inventory and recognition. Even among the sciences taxonomy is a poor relative. Every high school boy interested in wildlife recognizes electronic apparatus and fast vehicles as the symbols of truly chic research.

The use of the food chain as an instrument in the perception of creature-rights in sympatric existence grows from the evolution of human thought. Such is the evidence of anthropology. But to bring the food chain into the sphere of every human experience as the language of relatedness requires a more explicit and personal poetry, the precisely honed metaphors of ritual ceremony. Joseph Campbell suggests that the only effective rituals are those that refer to something homologous in each individual infancy.[3] In this case the primordial association is with oral nutrition. In suckling, we mammals prepare a vision of the world.

The point is that to describe food chains verbally is ineffective; one must use a deeper language. That ritual ceremony has deeper roots than speech is evident in its universality. Its very use by us is a sign of continuity with nature. Among vertebrate animals the important information is communicated in stereotyped, unequivocal signs derived by "stylization" from some basic care-giving behavior. Thus is a drinking posture ritualized by gulls to affirm a pair-bond or the exaggerated yawn of the baboon as a threat. Such signals are always communicative, species-specific, given in context, innate, and often in tandem or cybernetic arrangements. They range from momentary displays of bright feathers to extended human religious ceremonies, a continuum that seems objectionable only to those committed to doctrines of separatism. The whole range of ritual from courtship in birds to Renaissance art was surveyed under the aegis of the Royal Society of London in 1956. Since then, ethological work, studies of human behavior, and the psychological study of art — particularly Franco-Cantabrian cave painting — support the unifying thrust of that symposium under Julian Huxley's leadership.[4]

Although we can never know what ceremonies were held in the paleolithic caves of Southern Europe twenty thousand years ago, there is a substantial argument that the game mammals portrayed were perceived in a metaphor of human dimorphism, and that the painted forms on the naturally rounded surfaces functioned as transitional objects in the psychiatric sense of forms intermediate between self and not-self. They are formulations of trophic status transformed by the philosophy of a great Magdalenian culture.

Only beings which have a place in a coherent creation can have rights. Ultimate questions of personal and species identity turn not only on the question of what one eats or is eaten by, but upon the silent wisdom that unity is achieved by the specific eating of kinds and parts, a merger of natures and mutual assimilation thrown into relief by that which is not eaten and by the anastamosing of the one food chain with the many. If the indigent state of taxonomy shows the low regard of the insular human intellectual community for the gnosis of kind and category, the secular meal must be its public counterpart.

Might saying grace have ecological consequences? Indeed, it may be impossible to overestimate the achievement of interspecies ethics that would follow a renewal of ceremony at table. In a single generation there might come into existence a society imbued with the joyful solemnity of assimilation as children and weaned on its

2 Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 137.

3 Joseph Cambell, *The Masks of God*, Vol. 1, *Primitive Mythology* (New York: Viking, 1959).

4 *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, B 251, 1956.

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sacred meaning in adolescence. The implications would carry beyond the particular organisms consumed, since the homologizing nature of ritual would spread sanctity across the whole of life.

This would fly directly into the face of the humanitarian impulse. Instead of turning from death — and therefore from life — dietary ritual explicates the rights of animals in the why and by whom they are killed and eaten. In its absence, consider the middle class meal in which children are normally unreflective or conditioned to be silent regarding the death on the plate before them and who, when reminded of it, react out of repugnance for all things bloody and organic, by which a fastidious society has trained them to deny the sensuous spirituality of living tissue, or they indulge in the sentimental tantrums which prevent the human heart from childhood to senility from truly loving the Other. Only from the right to die and be eaten properly, in the proper and acknowledged food chain, can the right to life for all creatures become apparent.

Albert Schweitzer's "reverence for life" seems an appropriate term for this. But for him there was no room for predation at all. He remarked that it was a perpetual sorrow that life feeds on life. He could not break out of a two-thousand-year tradition in which the loss of paradise was associated with the daimonic metaphor of the apple of paradise — the coupling of eating and sexuality which is a central image of venatic thought. It is not surprising that two thousand years of this denial of life produced civilizations in which all eating is regarded as merely bodily and sensual instead of sacred, guilt is a perpetual side-dish, and every animal stands pre-judged for all time.

Of course this paints an incomplete picture of our society. Communion is a Christian rite of assimilation by eating and drinking. If ecologically it seems like holy cannibalism, it at least retains the potential forms for an interspecies ceremony. Meal-time grace is still widely observed. Even if it thanks an abstract provider instead of the creatures eaten, it at least calls attention to an obligation and keeps alive nutritional hierophanies.

Gratitude for the meal is only a beginning. Before it comes the cooking, butchering or preparation, killing or finding. Among the living peoples for whom the sacred and profane are not sealed off from each other, every stage in the food quest carries on its back some special observations and protocol. It remains to be discovered whether children have critical period requirements in these activities. Is witness to butchering-before-eating, for example, an irreplaceable event in the life of a five-year-old by which the articulation of one's own insides is achieved? If so, butchering is an "educational" event in the organization of internal reality and perhaps even an archetype of a larger reality.

As any coroner, surgeon, or anatomist knows, what is revealed in dissection is not simply a standard suit of entrail underwear, like the parts of a certain kind of automobile. What can be learned is never complete, as

every individual is a departure in detail from a basic schema. Besides its candidacy for rites of assimilation, every corpse is an omen. Its anatomical eccentricities are surprises which signify on several levels. A liver is a message about the quality of food and drink antecedent in the food chains and therefore the quality of the soil which supports them. In addition to these causal connections, the organs flesh out possible shifts in the social entities to which they are analogous and seem to bear oracular power. Every animal to be eaten is first a message which we ignore at our peril, its language garbled where animals are domesticated, and denied to modern urban children.

The words "sacred", "sanctity", and "spirituality" have been used in these remarks related to the trophic apparatus of human ecology. The poetry of the food chain and its mythic potentiality are better perceived in religious than legal terms. The rights of men in society can be articulated and are understood to be social and political creations, even though they are thought to incarnate something intrinsic. But the rights of non-human forms *are* their behavior. Since there is no alternative except death, "right" is synonymous with their continued existence. When non-human rights are dealt with directly in the courts a farcical parody of justice occurs — as in the 14th century when roosters and donkeys were burned at the stake or given other punishment. Certainly humans can be constrained by legal means in their actions toward the non-human. The difficulty is that "continued existence" refers to a species, not to killing versus non-killing. Like Aldo Leopold's definition of conservation as "what

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a man thinks while chopping" a tree, it is less a question of *what* is done than of *how* it is done.

Zoomorphizing in the Quest for Identity

Apart from food chains, there is another universal interpenetration with non-human life that could be evoked in the name of the whole. The emptiness of the modern human psyche is twofold: at one end the loss of identity in food chains and at the other a more immediate failure in the perception of self. If only we knew all the other creatures perfectly it would leave exactly the cognitive space for man; we would know who we are as humans without having once looked into a mirror. We are endlessly engaged in search of surcease from our inchoateness. Throughout life we put ourselves in a kind of cosmic police lineup, now beside an oak, then beside a dolphin, then a chimpanzee. Of each we can say, "We are not this . . . and yet, there is just this that we share . . ." With each discovery we place one piece in a puzzle.

Of course the process is not that conscious or deliberate. Instead we "take up the other" as a metaphoric strategy in play and language, in a drama of predication, of the suspension of disbelief while assuming another identity to find our own. Before we can be subjects to ourselves we must become objects. To think as men we must first think as non-men. To think non-men is to enact them. Does this zoomorphizing seem merely to compound the error of anthropomorphizing, already so widely regretted by intellectuals?

Both may have a place, but they are not co-equals. Men are zoomorphs while other creatures are not men. Zoomorphizing places us in the context that protects us from that anthropomorphism which empties the taxonomic pyramid like a funnel and remakes the diverse forms of life in our image. Zoomorphizing connects us to the plurality of otherness.

The imitation of animals by children in games of leapfrog, the investment of personality in a stuffed animal toy, the animal stories and animated films, the animal-headed gods, the metaphors in language ("He is a skunk!") are more than illustrations or even analogies. By incorporating into one body the mix of self and not-self the wholeness of diversity is confirmed, in the moment before we sort them out. The body — the organism — is the archetype of connectedness. In this way the process of locating ourselves bit by bit in different natures does not shatter us like glass.

The metaphoric recapitulation has its own ontogeny, a progressive unfolding in each human life. For the seven-year old playing fox-and-geese it functions differently than among adolescents playing on a football team called "panthers," and differently still in the caricaturing by cartoons on an editorial page. A lifetime of non-human sign images stretches from them to the troubled subjectivity of the human self and group, arching through each life more or less ceremonially.

It may be asked at this point whether this widespread use of animal metaphors has anything to do with the rights of animals. Is this not just another example of man's self-centered exploitation of his fellow creatures? True, we "use" animals and plants as metaphoric fillers in successive frames of reference, making them into instruments of thought and perception. But in the process they also become themselves. The effect of locating them in a cognitive framework flows both ways: self recognition and niche recognition. After all, the same accusation of exploitation can be directed to the eating of animals which I have already discussed. The question itself is biased by ideology. The ideological question represents the no-compromise idealism of dichotomy-choice. The biological form of that imagination is the two categories: man and animal. In that view, if rights of the non-human are simply for the non-human to be what they are, the amorphous nature of non-human amounts to no right at all.

Another question may be raised as to whether the taking of animal identity by metaphoric predication actually requires natural species. James Fernandez speaks of this "primordial" predication in childhood as a stage from which a maturing ritual capacity progressively refines its transformation terms.[6] He cites the ceremony of the Eucharist as an adult example. Nowhere does he explicitly say that the human capacity for liturgical rites

5 Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 68.

6 James Fernandez, "The Mission of Metaphor in Expressive Culture", *Current Anthropology*, 15(2):119-146, 1974.

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requires a childhood fixation on animals, but only that animals are conveniently ubiquitous. Even if one were to acknowledge the necessity of animals at some critical period in triggering the child's poetic sense, why would imaginary animals not do just as well? Moreover, the predication is not that of an animal itself but of a sign-image. To momentarily take the point of view of the bull or the wolf does not require the presence of an actual bull or wolf. If the stuffed toy is a vehicle by which the culture transmits these sign images to the child, why not a soft furry "wook" or "gleefus"? — not a creature from familiar nature, but a new invention for which no natural prototype is necessary and whose natural history can be equally fictitious?

The question goes to the heart of the matter. It opens questions about the relation of art to nature which cannot be gone into here. It bears, moreover, on the revolution in perception of the world by which domestication and agriculture separated themselves off from hunting/gathering, and, as Levi-Strauss says, the model of reality was shifted from its ancient place in nature to the world of made things as totemism was replaced by caste. Still further, the question bears on the place of monsters in psychology and culture.

In a study of the sculptured animals on gothic cathedrals Walter Abell made the extraordinary observation that there was a correlation over some 300 years of French history between the amount of social stress and the amount of stylization of the carved figures.[7] He concluded that periods of tension and unrest, times of famine, plague or war coincided with abstract forms, and alternatively that social and ecological harmony was signified in naturalistic forms. Much the same thing can be seen in 19th century landscape painting. Presumably, we cannot accept a world whose purposes are inimical to our own. In good times nature can be taken at its face value, but in bad we must look to its fundamental structure below the visible surface for the necessary support which its externals deny.

Monsters and imaginary forms are to this extent mind-creatures of desperation, emergency sign-images. In a sense no imaginary creature is possible: if we give the "gleefus" legs or a head it has some reference to the zoological realm. The virtual impossibility of imaginary beings, unfettered by natural features, suggests that the unthinkable is unthinkable because of the necessity of creature prototypes or metaphors in the genesis of human thought. Did the human mind invent the ecological niche system or is mental activity an expression of the species system?

But the question remains — any number of objects in our environment may satisfy the resolution by metaphoric predication that relieves one more iota of our poor pronoun nebulousness. Can we not say that some of us are more like Fords and others like Oldsmobiles with some profit?

No doubt such objects can serve the function, but the problem they raise has to do with content. A quick survey of the stuffed creatures in toy shops confirms an unconscious and unarticulated consumer demand — that the definition between kinds be kept, that identity remains important. The distinctions go far beyond the leopard's spots, extending to its behavior as well. These features are not invented; they are empirical. The ultimate reference is the real animal. The silent demand by children that that reference be kept sharp is evident in the naturalism of the toys. There is a demand taxonomy implicit which is also associated with the hierarchic structure of taxonomic categories — species, genera, families and so on. Made and fictitious objects suffer from an inevitable ambiguity of systematic relationship as well as behavior.

Some of the inchoateness of our lives can never be resolved, though we are destined to continue trying. "What does it mean to be alive?" is one of those elemental enigmas. No one outgrows such primary questions. We may leave the paradigm of the animal to small children only at the risk of subscribing to the doctrine of the great chain of being, wherein the natural is lower or simpler. To the biologist, those who call machines "alive" are toying with deep semantics. The predication of the Ford or Oldsmobile, the taking of machine shape and the transient identification with it is a dangerous game to play. This is not because it threatens human dignity —

7 Walter Abell, *The Collective Dream in Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), Ch. 14.

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an injury to our pride — but because it displaces us from a primary task of marking out a place in a cosmos that is given and which is more terribly Other than anything we can make.

Levi-Strauss is concerned with the intellectual use of natural things for the purpose of social categorization — the formal metaphoric predications of totemism. It is but a part of the perennial need to distinguish between men and other creatures, the preoccupation in human thought with the separation of culture and nature. I mention this here to remind us that what has been said on the preceding pages is not intended to support the pop-ecological theme of man's *identity* with nature. Pretending to be an animal is to obtain a momentary identity for the purpose of partly breaking it. In this the two formalities — the food chain and the predication of sign image — have certain things in common.

They both are the obtaining of a whole being to unite with it, to reject the 'inedible' while assimilating certain of its qualities. Such creatures are not arbitrarily obtained by the individual; his culture has selected the subsystems of trophic and paradigmatic biota. Both refer to natural history and extend into the environment from mind and body through connections that are discerned in nature: to hunt is to know the habits of the hunted; to enact is to know the habits of the model.

Metaphor

The quest for the nature of the human self is linked to an information pool found in the biosphere. The information content of an eco-system is related to its genetic complexity, organized into species; it is transmitted primarily by reproduction and predation. The transformation of this information by the human quest is largely through metaphor. This activity discerns not only separate species in their uniqueness but the centrality of the food chain. Thus, for example, food exchange in nature is the archetype of exogamy — the information flow through marrying-out that relates clans one to another. The eating — the food chain — is the language of mythical heroes and animals. Communications regarding status therefore involve ritual aspects of ingestion. In any specific ceremony it is right that certain things be eaten as much as that certain ones eat.

Ecological study has firmly established that the well-being of prey species is as much at stake as that of predators in food chain systems. The "struggle" of the individual prey to elude the predator has to do with sorting out particular sets of genes for continuation, not for the escape of the prey as a species. By eating certain individuals and not others the predator becomes the prey's instrument for filtering the information to be transmitted to its own succeeding generations. Moreover, the hawk's "choice" of eating a rabbit instead of a mouse may be looked upon inversely as an option within the eco-system whereby part of its total information is in that instance transmitted along certain lines and not others. In these examples it cannot be asserted that the hawk "uses" the mouse or rabbit any more than the mouse uses the hawk or the ecosystem uses them both.

The human use of animals as food for thought may be looked upon in the same light. After several hundred thousands of years of the cultural exercise of metaphor, who has chosen whom? Like the options in the food web not exercised on any given occasion, can we say that the natural things for which *this* culture has no poetic use are unimportant? Every exercise of these predications furthers a relationship. How arbitrary can a conception slowly built up in this way be? One test of validity is in the consequences in human action. Whole ecosystems may live intact or be impaired. Therefore every species in them has some stake in the outcome. If the basic acts of metaphoric predication are instinctive and unconscious then man is no more aware of what is accomplished than the animals whom he caricatures. Can we say that he "chooses" the elephant to imitate in a certain ritual any more than that the elephant has chosen to direct some of its impact on the environment via this route instead of, say, pulling up Acacia trees? Even if we grant that the elephant is indeed an arbitrary cultural choice, we cannot so easily claim that the necessity of making *some* choice is an optional device created out of thin air, as that is inconsistent with the evidence. The very plurality of increments in this lifetime process requires an equally complex field of reference. Indeed, the complexity of relationships that are perceived demands many more kinds of creatures, habitats, terrains and places than are incorporated in these enactments.

If, as I have suggested, the continuity of these processes results in both the human and non-human members having "vested interests", then what emerges is a field of relationships not unlike that of parts of the human body. Is the question, "What are the rights of my foot?" meaningful? Only to the extent that it calls attention to contiguity. Suppose we could only see the foot and did not know that a man dangled from it? We still could not call it into court. Would we establish laws concerning the protection of feet? If so, what about the thousand other parts of the body similarly perceived?

It is a poor analogy perhaps, but will have to serve the conclusion. What we do instead is to undertake a formal reticence, a restraint resulting in its protection. For every species we behave as though there were an unseen man attached to it — some part of our humanity in jeopardy.

But this perspective does not really evoke social action or legal policy. Since the connections are unseen they are best referred to indirectly. The official legislation of poetry, drama, or religion is generally unsuccessful. They are their own best arguments. To begin some slight shift in our general sense of acknowledgement or affirmation may be all that is possible — a rite no more revolutionary than a few moments reflection on the consequences of buying prepared food: a society wolfing down meat it was too chicken to kill and prepare, activities going against the grain because they soil one's hands. □

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MIKE BORICH

IN THE ARMS OF SNAKE

The moment my father dyed
my anklebone color to the scarlet
of sunset as the sun drags its wounded
sky into cleansing, I felt the mooncut
of knife fangs bite deeper than the

rattlesnake blade. Quailgrass boiled, winding
like a forest of snakes, crawled their shadows
over my face skin. The pain wrapping my
leg, coiling, tightened, tightened. The movement
of stone, weighted limbs, dead branches of black

oak grew in my veins, in the violent
flushing scales of my awakened leg.
And my father digging, scooping, planting
the slim throat of his knife into my skin,
searching for the dark root from where

all men descend into the flesh of their
children. The air bursting from my lungs
like snakes escaping birth shells, bright airy
fear biting my eyes, toothless, raw.
The rigid, worn-down shine of rising blades,

my leg unclasping its hip, severs
the red joining fibers and like a blind,
eyeless worm, flops, flops, thrashes
into black. The thick, unclosing eyelids
shed surface. Like a river of snakes

my vision ravels in my skull, flows
into the cracks of familiar bone.
My father, now a knife, cannot stop his plunge,
and all my breaking strips reel away
with life. My fingers and toes ribbon

like garter snakes. My arms, bullsnakes
or timber rattlers, shaking their child's
toys and bending, parting the stalks,
reeds jab in the ground. The pure, sharp
form of my body bites into the earth,

spitting my poison, my juice into
the sucking, quivering, dying, red eyed
emptiness. The heat of fever has cooled.
Sweat drains its venom.
The earth relaxes in my arms, slumps

its weight and falls. In the silent
hollows under my skin, snake eggs
are budding, stemming, hatching their
twisted, snaky petals. My veins move
on their own, blue, and tightening

their coils to invisible bones.
Horny tails switch in my belly.
The snouts of my fingers blotch,
upturn, stripe along the sides.
My jaws, my hooked teeth, expand

under this flickering tongue. Vipers
hiss in my nose. Logs and leaves
drift mounds around me. Tangles
of my flesh stretch for sunny rocks.
My glands swell, the liquid drips

and spurts, I cannot contain it and striking
my father's leg I suck and suck, the joyous
serpent bleeding the salt, sucking
and spitting and sucking the blood
of my father, my womb.

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a mod'ern lan'guage asso'cia'tion conven'tion or'gy

A FICTION by EDWARD GUBAR

Ruth said: I don't want to take my clothes off if the lights are on. I mean just like that.

Alex said: Oh Ruth.

Mike said: Why don't we have another drink and see what happens.

Ruth said: I'm going into the bathroom.

Mildred said: Let me get the ice first.

Don said: I don't have all night.

Alexandria Harper was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, attending the Modern Language Association Convention to hear an essay read by her major advisor, and to be job interviewed by four or five schools for the following September. In fact, she preferred to remain at Chicago for another year of research and writing, until her dissertation, "The Conquering Heroes: Sexism as a Literary Convention in Nineteenth Century Fictions," was done. Thus she anticipated her interviews without nervousness.

Alex, as she preferred to be called, had straight brown hair which dropped down just below her shoulders. Her habitual headbobbing, almost ticlike, kept it looking windswept. Lean and sinewy, always stylishly dressed—in winter she preferred tweeds or foreign wool—Alex appeared haughty and confident from a distance. But her large green eyes, prone to gloss and challenge and drop, and her affected English accent, exaggerated in times of stress, revealed a generally insecure person. Sometimes she worried about the size and shape of her nose. Her nervousness embarrassed her. Besides reading Laing and Erikson, she tried to compensate by freely using obscenities and pretending to an insider's knowledge of pop culture and its attendant mores, all of which she was too cynical to fully embrace.

On the day before the convention began she had had an opportunity to meet Kate Millett, through a mutual friend, which she had avoided out of fear and embarrassment, and on the first day of the convention she was still feeling stupid and immature about her behavior.

Alex was staying in room 1556 at the Hilton, sharing it with Mildred Barstow, whom she had known while an undergraduate at Swarthmore.

Don said: You academics are a bunch of talk freaks. In and out. Here and there. Watch and do. Do and watch. It's not an especially big deal.

Mildred said: I don't see you throwing off your clothes. Don't be so damned overbearing. We're here now. We're ready. We just have to get comfortable with each other.

Alex said: I think Ruth is taking a shower.

Mike said: Or drowning herself.

Alex said: Some people always take showers before they make love.

Mildred said: Maybe we all should.

Mike said: I trust all of you implicitly.

Don said: I didn't bring my toothbrush.

Alex said: Forget it. I feel very clean. Now if we could all fit in that shower.

Mildred said: Right.

Ruth said: Here I am.

Alex said: What a nice robe. Is it Mexican?

Ruth said: Yes.

EDWARD GUBAR lives in Bloomington, Indiana; this is his second appearance in the NAR.

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Don Cotton was a writer of articles and stories for various underground and countercultural publications. He had had a very autobiographical novel published a few years before. Some commentators had compared his style to Hemingway's, without noticing his peculiar version of Hemingway's definition of courage. In both his fiction and non-, Don's protagonist or persona usually demonstrated grace under pressure by rejecting homosexual advances, gently and with elan, after precipitating such advances by posturing and teasing. For this reason the literate segment of the gay community considered him rather an Uncle Tom, given what they knew of his private life and loves.

At thirty-two, Don was too old ever to have been a serious drug user, but he drank heavily, and had begun to cultivate an image of himself as an aging writer, still hip, trim and well-muscled, whose writing reflected the sentimental cynicism and malaise he felt regarding the times in which he lived. He particularly enjoyed writing obits of youthful suicides.

Don kept his dark brown hair long and liked to dress in leather or darkly hued suede. He never wore undershorts. His face was almost perfect: straight white teeth, deeply set dark brown eyes, an almost Grecian nose, and thin, sensual lips made him sometimes appear smoothly disdainful. He liked to use his face. A lack of height—he was barely five-seven—and a wart on his left cheek which sometimes got infected were the only aspects of his appearance which ever disturbed him.

Don was at the convention by day—he lived on the lower East Side of Manhattan—to participate in a symposium, "The Future of Fiction in a Fragmented Society," chaired by an old high school friend, now on the faculty at Penn.

Alex said: Is there some appropriate music we should play? This sounds like nice screwing music. Let's go over and sit in the bed.

Mike said: It's a nice big bed.

Mildred said: Pull the spread down first.

Ruth said: Wait, Mike.

Don said: No, no, let him take it off. And you, Alex, why don't you start undressing him. And Mildred, you undress Alex.

Mildred said: What are you, a director? Why are you standing over by the window anyway?

Don said: There are five of us you know. I thought I'd watch for a while. That *is* okay.

Alex said: There's only one man over here, Donald.

Don said: I thought we had already discussed the limitless possibilities of five bodies.

Mike said: Would you like to come back to my room, Ruth?

Ruth said: No.

Mildred said: Oh crap, give it a chance.

Don said: Change the station.

Mildred Barstow was an Assistant Professor of English at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. Her dissertation had been a study of Doris Lessing, her degree from Wisconsin. But Mildred was no longer sure she wanted to continue her career in academia. She didn't mind teaching, at which she was sometimes excellent with certain students, but she had discovered that most of her colleagues were truly middle class consumer types, career and decorum oriented, not unlike most of the graduate students she had known in Madison. There she had assumed that once on a faculty she would become a member of an intellectually stimulating, politically active, vibrant community. She had been naïve.

Her current research, an attempt to explain the discrepancy in technical innovation between American male and female writers, had further discouraged her. Women were just more interested in people and social interplay than in playing with forms. Such a conclusion, while culturally accurate, was not academically publishable, nor appropriate. Mildred had begun to feel the same about her own personality.

Contrasted to Alex, whom she almost loved because of the differences between them, Mildred was nearly disheveled. Sometimes fat, somewhat short, always heavy bottomed, she had unkempt auburn hair and crooked teeth which protruded, but she was not unattractive. An occasional interest in clothes—she preferred slightly whory styles which exposed her overample bosom—and an unchecked enthusiasm which helped her take command of social situations, usually made her a center of interest and attention.

She was at the convention to help organize a forum for Womens' Study Programs and to attend whatever else interested her.

Alex said: We're all being very silly.

Don said: I agree.

Mildred said: Crap. Don's right. We are paralyzed by words. Here, pull my zipper down. My bod will turn you all on.

Alex said: I think it's stuck.

Mike said: You could be a person who went to an orgy but didn't do anything because your zipper was stuck.

Ruth said: Let me do it.

Mike Zeller had taken his doctorate at the University of Virginia the previous year, but had remained in Charlottesville on a post-doctoral grant to turn his dissertation, "The Maltese Falcon and Other Fakes", basically a structural analysis of American detective fiction, into a book. Though not happy with the department at Virginia—he disliked the almost corporate sense of gamesmanship which existed among its members—it had been a strategic place from which to take a degree, and Mike expected to secure a good job somewhere in New England, hopefully close to his native and well-loved Boston.

Adept at what he did, nothing spectacular or world-

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shaking, but sharp enough to cause notice in the insulated environs of English academia, Mike was not very nervous about the seven job interviews he had scheduled. He had already published an article in *Film Quarterly*, so could easily claim interdisciplinary credentials, a current vogue. He had only to sign a contract to assure publication of his thesis. The telephone calls and letters written on his behalf by members of the faculty at Virginia had also definitely increased his prospects. Mike thought he might even get an offer at an interview.

Despite a genuine intellectual commitment—Mike truly loved reading books and watching movies, then talking, thinking, writing about the experience—he considered the academic aspects of the convention to be only a milieu for his future colleagues to preen. In the time between interviews Mike hopefully expected to engage in an affair, of convention duration, if he could find a suitable partner. Thus he was staying by himself in room 1758 of the Hilton, though he could hardly yet afford it.

Usually smiling, Mike had the aspect of a big, happy, hairy bear. His glinty, dark brown eyes and a wild Jewish Afro hinted at an intensity of spirit he himself debunked. He wore a scraggly beard on his chunky face which had the effect of diminishing the appearance of his large nose. Fulsome amounts of beer and ale over the past few years had begun to sag his belly, so despite his height Mike looked smaller and stumpier than he actually was. A natural attraction to blonde, gentile girls, often returned, made him overconscious of such loungelike posture, especially in their presence. Recently he had been trying to stand straight and tall.

Mildred said: I don't believe this. Are you all just going to sit around and look at my ass?

Mike said: You've got a really nice one. No dimples.

Don said: I happen to be staring at Ruth's extraordinary breasts.

Alex said: There's hardly any point in rushing.

Don said: Quite right.

Alex said: Don't do that Mildred. Please. I'll get out of these things myself.

Don said: Slowly, with feeling.

Mike said: Should I close the lights?

Mildred said: Are you kidding?

Don said: Quite right. Just put that one lamp out.

Ruth said: You have very beautiful skin.

Don said: Extremely.

Alex said: It's nothing.

Mike said: I guess we should take our clothes off too.

Mildred said: Yeah, c'mon.

Don said: Hands off.

Ruth Clark Sawyer was a Shelley scholar whose husband, Phil, taught history at Berkeley. He and the children, Sam and Abigail, six and four, had stayed in Philadelphia with his parents, and Ruth had come to the convention on her own. Though she had no interviews scheduled, Ruth was looking forward to attending various functions and perhaps meeting old graduate school friends. She had come as much to be alone as to validate her academic identity.

During the 'sixties Ruth had been deeply involved in the Berkeley political scene. Recently she had resumed work on her dissertation, now almost complete, only to find that her life, without any outside verification, had become circumscribed. Faculty wife and mother. In the past year she had begun to feel trapped, something Phil had not yet begun to understand. And unfortunately there were no jobs in her field in the Berkeley area.

Although she had engaged in short, meaningless affairs with some of her political acquaintances, about which she had never told Phil, she had never considered such encounters very important, until very recently, when she began to believe that sexual adventures might be the only way of establishing a separate identity for herself. This distressed her. And she knew that sometime soon she and Phil would have to talk seriously about their life together, especially in relation to her own options.

Ruth was large and shapely, quite beautiful, with long blonde shiny hair and deep blue eyes. Her nose was thin, almost too long, her skin had a healthy pallor to it. She had round, full breasts, but the clothes she wore, usually California Mexican, diminished her possible elegance. Obese during much of her adolescence she had less of the self-confidence and disdain a woman of her appearance might reasonably possess.

She was staying by herself in room 1480 of the Hilton. It was the first time she had ever been in New York alone and it made her feel slightly dangerous. Unfortunately, since being in the East, unused to winter temperatures after many years in California, she had been quite cold.

Mike said: Do you want another drink, too, Ruth?

Ruth said: Yes, but not so strong.

Don said: You've got a bit of a belly there, Irishman.

Mike said: I'm not Irish. Anyone else?

Mildred said: Sure, why not? I always go to parties where people take their clothes off and pass out.

Alex said: You're too anxious. Give us a chance. We hardly know each other.

Mike said: Ass.

Ruth said: What?

Mike said: Lots of ass. Thin, just right, overmuch.

Mildred said: What is this, a contest?

Don said: Nifty. You three stand over there by the window.

Alex said: Why?

Don said: You'll see.

Mike said: Let it go. I'm getting under the covers.

Mildred said: Why don't you two do it? There's probably a ruler around.

Alex said: Mildred.

Mildred said: I didn't come here to play doctor.

Don said: Open wide.

Ruth said: You're all crazy.

Alex said: I can't believe it. Just relax, all of you.

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Mildred said: Come kiss me, Alex.
Don said: Bravo.
Alex said: That can wait.
Ruth said: I'm getting under the covers.
Mike said: Good idea.
Mildred said: Me too.
Alex said: Donald.

On the morning of the first day of the convention Mildred and Alex agreed to meet at five, for drinks and dinner, then separated, Alex to interviews, Mildred to meetings.

Ruth, awake at nine, and unsure yet how she planned to spend the day, walked over to the coffee shop at the Americana for breakfast. Mike saw her through the window as he was walking by and decided to postpone the Bogart double feature on Forty-Second Street and have breakfast himself. He adjusted the convention badge on his corduroy lapel and entered the restaurant where he took a seat adjacent to hers at the counter.

Ruth, who had noticed Mike's interest from her stool, was uncertain about her response should he attempt to speak with her, but had decided to be amused, if she could be.

What's your name, where are you from, why are you at the convention, you have beautiful hair, Mike quickly introduced himself. Then made her laugh by debunking such palaver.

Ruth had never seen such kinky hair. After some more jokes by Mike about their attempted discovery of mutual acquaintances, Ruth declined an invitation to Bogart, but accepted an appointment for later that afternoon.

At one, after a morning of Womens' Work, Mildred found herself with nothing to do until a later appointment with an old friend from Madison, so she wandered into a large meeting room on the basement floor, took a seat in a folding chair at the back of the room, and listened to some yammering about the future of fiction.

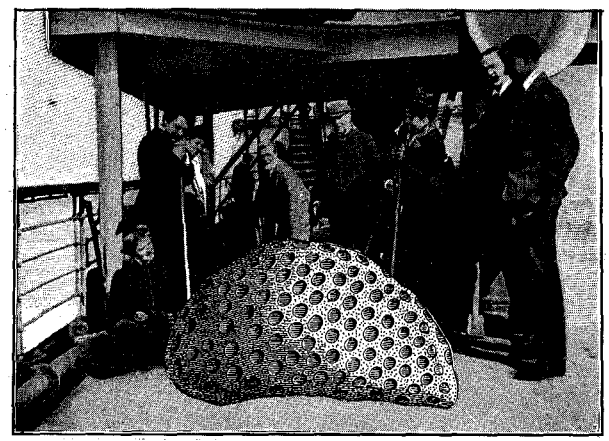
Ruth, who had spent a rather aimless morning wandering among the bookstalls in the basement, had become easily bored by the slick prognostications and nostrums emanating from the seminar table occupants. Most of the talk seemed to have little relevance to the contemporary fiction she enjoyed. It was easy to laugh when the woman who had sat down beside her a few minutes before began making snide comments about the participants.

Mildred, always pleased by an appreciative audience, and Ruth, happy to meet another woman, soon began to talk, and ignored the symposium. When the room emptied minutes later they remained, still talking. Fascinated by Mildred's energetic analysis of academic chauvinism, Ruth soon told something of her own situation. Mildred sympathized, offering suggestive alternatives, until she had to leave.

They agreed to meet for drinks later that afternoon. Mildred knew Alex would like to meet such a physically attractive person. Ruth hoped that Mike wouldn't mind, but didn't really care. She was happy to be filling her afternoon with people.

After participating in the symposium—boring, boring—he had almost fallen asleep, and enduring the long lunch and earnest talk which followed, Don and his friend from Penn had left the others and gone down to the Hilton bar, where Don remained alone, drinking, and constructing stories about the tall, tweedy girl who had come and sat beside him a half hour before.

Alex, desperate for a drink, had entered the bar at least an hour before her appointment with Mildred. Despite her lack of interest in a job for September her last interview had really disturbed her. The pigs. As if her marital and motherhood plans were any of their business. After two drinks and much muttering, she turned to the man drinking beside her, whose smooth good looks she had already noticed, and offered to buy him a drink. Not embarrassed as she hoped he might be, he accepted easily, and soon they were talking like old friends. His harsh, biting sense of humor improved her mood and after she had told him about the interview they joked about it and he offered to father a child for her if it would help her get a job. Although she hadn't read any of his work she had seen his name in print. Don Cotton.



Alex said: Do you think anyone can see us?
Don said: Not unless they've got binoculars.
Alex said: I'm disappointed. We could be doing this alone. And better.
Don said: What'd you expect?
Mike said: You two should come over here.
Mildred said: Yeah.
Ruth said: Oh.
Mike said: Is she better than I am?
Alex said: Chauvinist.
Mike said: Come over here and say that.
Ruth said: Oh yes.
Don said: Why don't you turn over, Mike.
Mike said: What do you mean?
Mildred said: That would be something to see.
Don said: Don't be vulgar.
Alex said: Can I direct now? Mildred and Don, and Mike and Ruth, girls on top. And only do what I say.
Mildred said: Damn it. This is not a movie.

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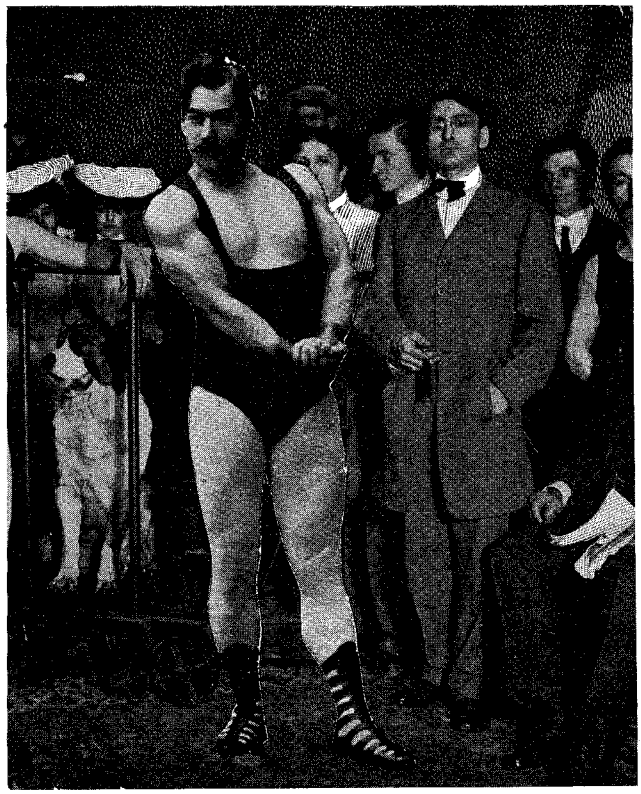
Mike said: I'll try anything once.
Don said: You don't turn me on, big boy.
Alex said: Oh no. Stop. I said stop.
Mike said: Poor Alex.
Ruth said: Not so tight. I can't reach her.
Alex said: Oh no. No.
Mildred said: Relax.
Don said: Good show.
Alex said: Stop.
Mildred said: Someone make me another drink.
Ruth said: Does anyone like to talk dirty?
Alex said: How quaint.



Mildred joined Alex and Don, but before she could be fully introduced, Ruth arrived, then Mike. There was some confusion until names and chairs could be assigned. Mike, slightly perturbed to find the others there, asked Ruth how she had spent the day. Alex laughingly bemoaned the loss of her quiet dinner with Mildred. Ruth, who had just spoken to Phil via telephone, only to be informed of childrens' colds and *mots*, was surprised to hear Mildred praising Don's performance at the symposium, but concurred anyway. Alex and Mike exchanged information about Virginia and Chicago. Realizing she hadn't introduced a man into the group, Mildred felt a twinge of pain but quickly repressed it. Mike and Don talked about some movies and disagreed over Warhol. Ruth and Alex agreed about Brautigan. Don bought everyone a round of drinks.

As the bar filled, the five began to mesh: Alex, coy; Don, satiric; Mike, boisterously cynical; Mildred, energetically feminist; Ruth, appreciative. After three rounds of drinks, in the midst of a joking argument about the validity of pornography as a form of social protest art, Mike suggested the Stage Delicatessen for dinner.

All agreed.

Mildred said: That's very good. You have an interesting technique. Don doesn't seem to be really involved.

Mike said: Shut up.

Mildred said: Oh crap. So what am I supposed to do? I can see the same thing for five dollars and not be cold.

Don said: Do yourself.

Alex said: Donald.

Ruth said: Cripes. Shut up already.

Mildred said: This is supposed to be an orgy. Five people. Five of us. Five. Oh hell.

Alex said: No, no, not like that.

Don said: Forget it.

Mildred said: Don't sulk.

Mike said: I have to go to the bathroom.

Ruth said: Don't.

Don said: One or two?

Mike said: Six.

Ruth said: Here, Mildred.

Mildred said: I'm not selfish. Join us.

Don said: Hands off.

Alex said: Yes, Ruth, yes.

Ruth said: Okay, okay.

Alex said: Yes.

Don said: Alex finally found out why she's here.

Mildred said: Oh shut up.

Cramped in a rear corner of the Stage the group continued their pornographic discussion and argued over the menu. Mike asserted his authentic ethnic identity and tried to assign choices. Alex argued that the heaviness of the food probably diminished sexual energy, which was denied by Don. Mildred and Ruth both professed great hunger. When the waiter came Mike tried to joke with him, but he was all business. Mildred ordered stuffed derma and a pastrami sandwich; Alex and Don, corned beef specials, all pickles for Alex; Mike, a chopped liver, turkey and onion club; Ruth, brisket and potato pancakes. All chose beer as a beverage, except Mike, who wanted Dr. Brown's Cel-Ray Tonic. Ruth and Alex laughed.

Soon after the food arrived, without quite knowing how it had come about, the five were talking animatedly about orgies, their relevance, frequency, and desirability. Don cracked some jokes about alienation which advertently indicated his experience in such activity. Alex revealed a clinical interest. Mildred admitted their cultural importance but suggested that the difficulties two people encountered made the addition of others highly problematical. Alex declared it was only a sex thing, not a relationship thing. Ruth remembered some people in

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California who had done it for years and liked it. Mike leered a preference for gentleness and privacy while stroking Ruth's knee beneath the table.

Alex suggested it first. Coolly. Mike laughed. Don smiled and gazed around the table. Ruth looked at her food. Mildred almost choked on her derma. Alex suggested it again. And they all laughed.

Mike ordered a round of Dr. Brown's for everyone. Alex deftly enumerated the various sexual possibilities. Don suggested it would be a good experience for all of them. Mildred, though still voicing reservations, acknowledged that each of them seemed to genuinely like at least two of the others. Mike admitted his excitement at the prospect of three women, then knocked the mustard off the table while stroking Alex's knee. Everyone laughed. Ruth agreed, after deciding, with the group's help, that it was somewhat less than adultery.

They toasted each other with Dr. Brown and settled the logistics. Ruth's room and two bottles of J&B, cost shared. Then had dessert. Cheese cake.

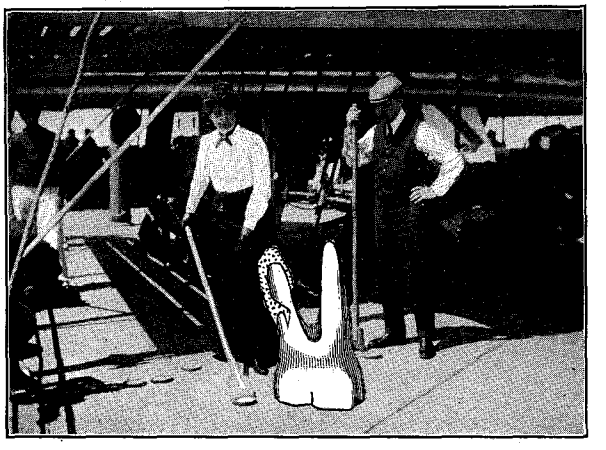
Alex said: Why don't we try a daisy chain?
Mike said: Forget it. This is going nowhere.
Don said: What's the big deal?
Ruth said: I'm tired.
Mildred said: Warmth, tenderness, gentleness. You people are just animals.
Alex said: Oh shut up.
Mike said: Keep your goddamn tempers. You couldn't just screw, could you?
Alex said: Oh shut up.
Don said: Now, now.
Mildred said: Damn! Enough!
Alex said: I had a very interesting time. I'm glad we did it. Perhaps we had the wrong combination of likes and dislikes.
Mike said: Go wave your ass in the hall.
Mildred said: Did anybody really get off besides Ruth here who's too stupid to know any better?
Ruth said: Oh.
Mike said: Leave her out of this.
Don said: Academics have got tongues attached to their groins. Wag, wag.
Mildred said: And what have you got, a pen? It might have helped.
Don said: Ugly bitch.
Mike said: He just had the wrong partner.
Don said: Up yours, hero.
Mike said: Not tonight, lover.
Alex said: Oh shut up already.
Mildred said: What the hell am I doing here?
Ruth said: Here's your goddamn clothes.
Don said: Good shot.
Mildred said: Nympho bitch.
Mike said: Leave her alone.
Alex said: Stop it.
Mildred said: Don't, you.
Ruth said: Would you all just get out!
Don said: Nighty-night.
Mike said: Cool it, faggot.
Don said: Yes sir, slugger.
Ruth said: Don't.
Mildred said: Oh crap.

Ruth went back to Philadelphia a day early, to Phil and the children, Sam and Abigail. And then they all flew back to Berkeley where she told Phil about it. The orgy.

He beat her up.

Mike got a job offer from UMass, Boston, the very next morning, and was very happy. He tried to reach Ruth three or four times but she was never in. That afternoon he met a very uncomplicated graduate student from Johns Hopkins who helped him celebrate. Alone.

Don went out drinking with Alex, then to a late night porno, and, after, to his apartment, where nothing sexual happened. Alex left by herself at six. As far as Don was concerned the orgy had been nothing more, nothing less, then he had expected. He thought he might even write a devastating satiric piece about it one day.



Mildred went out walking by herself, and was picked up by a swarthy, smelly young man who took her to a cheap hotel and screwed her, badly, for three hours, then tried to beat her up. But she managed to get her things together and leave without being hurt. She tried to talk to Alex when she returned, but was ignored.

A few weeks later Mildred wrote long, analytical letters to each of the participants in the orgy, letters in which she tried to describe why it hadn't worked, why each person was at fault, why she herself had suffered.

No one answered.

Alex returned to Chicago. Satisfied. An orgy. Why not? She hadn't really expected anything better and was somewhat more relaxed about herself because of her participation in sexual activities with women, although she didn't plan to do it on a regular basis. Secretly she felt very current. One afternoon, while doing research at the Newberry Library, she told her friend, Nikki Levin, about the whole event.

Nikki Levin told my wife. □

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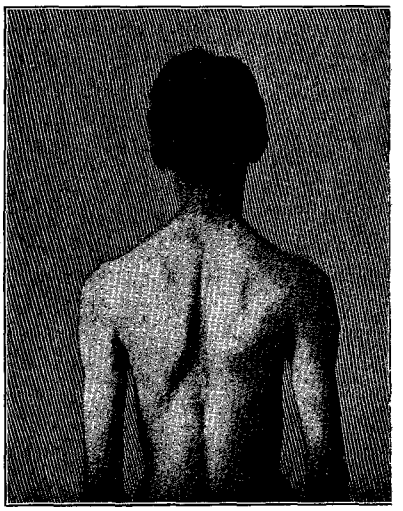
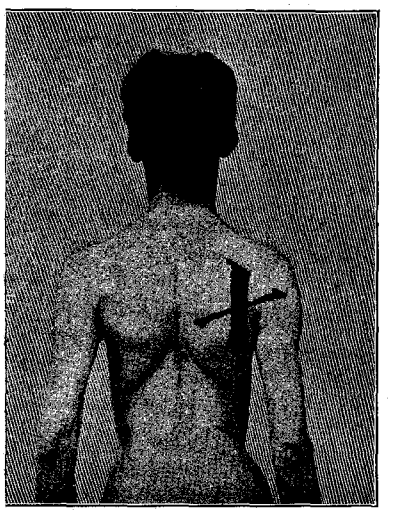


A BRANDED MAN



H.G. HOOPER

A cow is in line in front of the grey building in Petaluma. It is early morning, dawn. There is no sun, but the fog is grey and the yardlights have faded. The cows are lined up before a chute which angles up to a dock and to the large doors of the grey building. They queue up as if waiting for an English bus, as if such behavior was a phenomenon of nature. As if they are a part of nature. Their feed has been rich their whole lives; their exercise limited to that little necessary for growth. They stand and eat and excrete. The waste is used in the growing of plants. Plants are pumped full of what the cow cannot use and they stand tall. The land is enriched; its product is taken and pumped into the cow and it fattens. Then it stands in line, patiently, soothed by its fellows. The line moves and the stungun is placed against the flat, smooth forehead. There is the smell of blood now, and the eyes are wild. But the body is heavy and slow with the good grace of fat and perhaps it sees the fire of glory as the plunger rips and punches brain cells down into its throat.

The plump body is moved along, drained, prepared. The head is removed, then the hide which is firm and unscarred. There is a symphony of sharp knives and the sounds of large bandsaws. The skull is cleaned of the eyes and small muscles and these are placed in a clean steel tray. The tray steams. There is a fog outside and perhaps the cow's juices rise to become a part of it.

The man with the stungun turns to the next cow in his chute. His sleeve is rolled high and there is a tattoo: a snake—red, green, blue-black; it follows the muscle of his upper arm. Once he was given a pass in the Navy. He was fresh from his schooling and given the pass four weeks into boot camp, which meant he was given freedom, all he could handle, for twelve of his many hours. He went up the steep marble stairs of an old office building in San Diego and to the dusty door which said "Clement Lukes" in black letters on the translucent glass. Inside there was a smell of alcohol and several sailors whom the man did not know. They were all quite drunk, as was the man.

"A minute," Lukes called out from an interior room. "Take a seat." There was the hum of a machine and the hissed intake of breath from a man beneath the needle. Other men in the room said "all right" and "hang in there" as encouragements. The man flipped through some of the books lying on the table, scrapbooks of designs, some familiar, some complicated and obscure. There were insects and spiders, anchors, ships, memorials to mother and messages—"Don't Fool With Me"—that would throb on a biceps in strange bars. Girls' names in script developed by perched monks before navies knew blue waters. The man loved a girl at the time, but he was not sentimental. He chose a snake which coiled in long loops, not unlike those doctors placed at the edges of their stationary.

Clement Lukes placed a vomit pan next to his chair and began. The man was alone, drunk, without the support of friends. Lukes had taken a long time with his work as the man was determined to show no pain. When it was finished, the man was sober. The snake had taken, had scabbed over horribly in the colors of the dye, then settled permanently into his skin. It moved on his arm in the dim mirrors of a destroyer off oriental coasts. He moved it during fire watch, it danced on his arm. And then he forgot it, except to be a little ashamed of himself at times. It was the last thing the cow saw.

H. G. HOOPER lives in Ben Lomond, California—"on a quiet hillside in the Santa Cruz mountains"—and is a graduate of San Francisco State.

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A Branded Man

The man had come to his present station through ambition. He had been in carpentry; he had straddled the roof beams of the houses which mounted the dry hills. He had swung his hammer and had known the reward of driving a spike. And had seen the wood bleed water, as these were cheap homes, not built for passing on to posterity. But there were layoffs and seasons in home-building. He had a friend, a butcher. They drank beer together. The butcher steered him to the Union, the Union sent him to the grey building in Petaluma. It was steady work, the man thought. He would study the ways of meat and perhaps find himself leader of the rear of a supermarket. Behind the glass wall, dressed in white before a hardwood block. Steel machines which wrap in plastic and stamp weight, price. Carbon-steel knives that slice the fat from this roast, that steak. His mouth watered. Sneak home a prime cut for his Saturday dinner.

A bent, white-haired old fellow shook his hand from a sitting position behind his desk in the grey building. He seemed interested in motives.

"Do you have any problems about the killing done here?" he asked. The man was surprised. He said no. "Good," the old fellow said. "Because you start on the line. You should learn from the beginning. Cutting is a skilled trade; you should know it all."

The man said he was sure ready.

The white-haired fellow led the man through the plant. There was the noise of machinery and they did not talk much. Sides of beef hung from hooks, the hooks moving, the meat yellow with fat and very wet. There was steam but the rooms were cold and the floors ran with water. The man was surprised that it smelled more of the barnyard than of the machinery and meat. The bent old fellow led him into the area where the cattle were chuted and shot. He took the gun from one of the men working there and showed how it was loaded with .22 blanks and how it was placed on the forehead of a cow. The cow's eyes were stupid and filled with a red fear. The old fellow's face was calm and it did not change as he dispatched the cow.

"Then you do this," he said, showing the next steps in moving the carcass along. "Bother you? We want to know. Some people can't take it. Want to butcher but can't take the first step. Me, I see a cow like a diagram, all lines and patterns. Last step is a good steak. So this is where you'll be for a while."

"No problem," the man said. "None at all." Things like this did not bother him. He had once had to wash down a gun turret in which some fool had opened the breech on a slow fuse. Three men had been in the turret and he had been sent in with the hose after the corpsmen had packed their plastic bags. There was a missed piece of flesh in the debris and he had washed it out on deck. It did not bother him, he had not known the gunners very well. A deck officer had become sick over the side. The ship went off line and down to the Philippines for repairs. It was shit liberty. Only things to do were get screwed and tattooed. And he feared disease.

The man wore shorts and a T-shirt with the sleeves tight around his upper arms and the snake moved gently as he turned the steering wheel. His children in the back seat saw the snake when they looked at their father, but they were no longer moved by it. His wife sat close beside him, as she had done since they first dated, and she had used oils on her face which she removed now with tissues. She tucked them into a plastic bag hanging from the vent knob. The bag was red with white lettering: "Every Litter Bit Hurts" and had the symbol of a petroleum company done in the national colors underneath. The hanger on the bag was coming loose and she thought to throw it away the next time they gassed up.

The man had slept late today, as was his habit on weekends, and the children had become impatient in their swimming suits; the car was loaded with towels, hamper and blankets. The dog's barking woke him finally, though he had been only dozing, really, for an hour. The children had begun to battle outside on the lawn and the dog, thinking it was play, had barked. The man felt the impatience in the house, felt impatient himself. He did not shave. He had coffee, and a second cup in the car.

The sun was long up and the man's spirit was high. He did not often see this time of day out of doors as he entered the building in the grey fog of dawn and left it in the hot, smoking afternoon. Now the air was still cool and the sun was bright on the car and on his elbow out the window. They drove South, past Petaluma on the freeway, down the long brown valley where subdivisions fought for the hilltops and cattle grazed on the slopes. There was traffic on the narrow road over to the coastal hills. The Resort was in a sunny place in a canyon of that range of hills. A stream ran through and the Resort pumped water from it for its three pools. Two of the pools were heated and the water recirculated, the third, with the diving boards, had a cyclone fence around it and was icy cold. It took a certain age to enter it. The pools were set randomly in lawn which looked as cool and green as a neatly-trimmed golf course from the gate. Near the pools where the people crowded, the lawn was tufted and ragged with patches of mud where the chlorinated water ate the grasses. There were concrete sidewalks around each of the pools and whistles blew if anyone forgot himself and ran. The whistles sounded constantly, like angry birds.

The man paid admissions and bought a beer in a paper cup so he could use the cup for his own beer in the cooler. It was cheaper to bring your own, but the man did not like to look cheap. They found a place near the largest pool which had a good shallow area, and set out their blanket. His children were six and eight and they did not yet know how to swim. He determined to teach them today, but not right this minute. The children threw down their things and approached the water. Once there, they hesitated, walking around, testing. Other chil-

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dren were splashing in the water and it was noisy. Finally his daughter, who was eight, stepped down the steps in water up to her knees and then squatted. She pushed off the steps, turning her head sideways with a foolish expression, eyes closed, as if the water were about to slap her. She stood up at once, waist deep now, her hands held out like wings.

"Chicken," the man shouted at his son. The boy stood at the edge of the pool wearing a styrofoam float on his back like an extra lung. "Get in there." His son did not look at him.

The man took off his T-shirt and dropped his shorts. He sat down on the blanket and sipped at his beer. Whenever he was nearly naked in a public place he thought about the tattoo for the first few minutes of exposure. He wondered about having it removed, but thought of the pain and of having a scar shaped like a snake. Then he forgot about it. He looked around at some of the young girls in bikinis and regretted that his wife could not wear one. Her stomach was a mass of scar-tissue from childbearing and she wore a matronly one-piece. She was still shapely enough, though. She sat beside him, brushing her hair, her head down and arms reaching behind. The stiff top of her suit moved away from her breasts with each stroke and he wanted to touch her, but she would not like that here. He sipped his beer and noted that his son was standing gingerly on the step of the pool. His daughter was sneaking up behind to push him all the way in. The man waited for the whistle to blow.

After a while the man and his wife went in the water, she to the shallow end to join the children, he to the deep part, beyond the rope, where he jumped in feet first. The shock was not great and he swam a few strokes, then ducked under the rope and moved quietly up behind his son. He kept only his eyes and nose above the water and moved kneeling on the bottom, feeling like some great beast of the sea. The man ducked the boy and his son popped to the surface on his float and his face screwed up with rage. He began a choking cry and his father, disgusted, climbed out of the pool. He sat on the blanket in the sun and felt hungry.

When his family came out of the water some minutes later, he sent the children across the lawns to the booth to get hamburgers and french fries. His son carried back the cardboard tray while his daughter carried only her own food and the change. His son walked bowlegged, carefully, his eyes on his load. When he reached the blanket he gave his father a look of triumph; he had not spilled anything.

The man ate quickly and opened a beer from the cooler to fill the paper cup. It had not been enough food; he would have more later. He leaned back on his elbow and gazed at the thick grass near a bush where people didn't walk. It was damp and deep green and looked sweet. The man thought of eating the grass and he thought of his contentment and of the cow's contentment in eating the grass. He watched his children devour it, their mouths filled with its sweet grease, mustard trimming their lips. □

KATHE AGODOA

ON BECOMING A VEGETARIAN

The bed creaks under the weight of myself
and the rabbit, its fur with each of my breaths
fluff-blowing away then falling back
as madness does because the priest had said:
you can't live by your ideals. Yet

she flashes white
across the green-breathing lawn,
springs kicking mid-air, falls
dashing—stops: licks
to her face a slender paw,
and observes my observation
with a crystaline eye.

The light glitters on his knife as it swings
from side to side: where is there anything
generally assumed? the priest had said.

That white vision in my bed flows into a spotted
cat whose slow sheathing and unsheathing
of his claws I watch as though each movement
unravels my red shreds:

the paws press along the teetering
line of the backyard fence, the tail
swings—their yard, our yard, their
yard—our yard—he crouches
eyes glittering in the afternoon.

Lie still. Lie still. The madness and the vision
will crystalize and become one eye.

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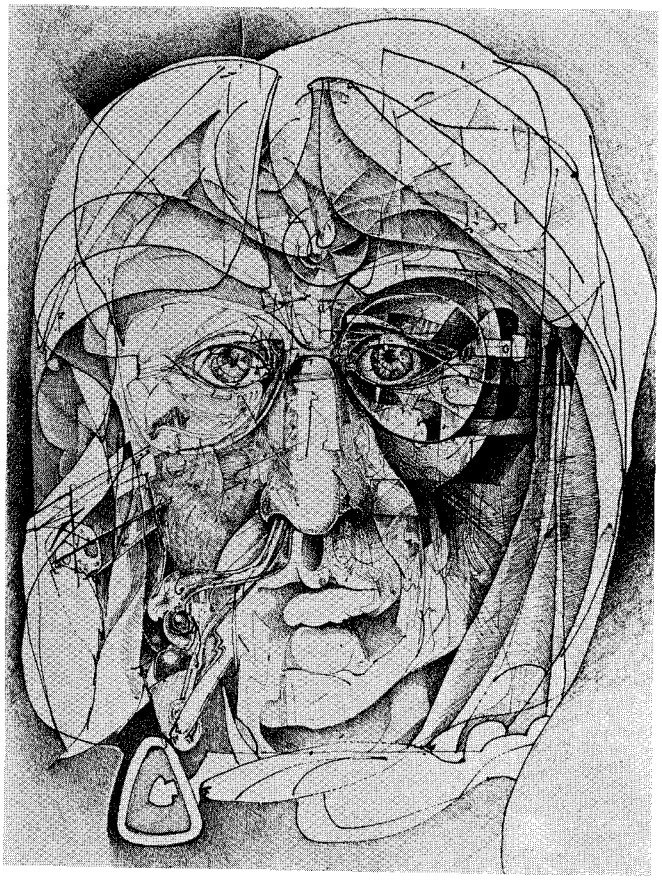

THE DESERTER

Timothy Southerly Goins

One hot windy afternoon in late October a young man, wearing over a recent crew cut the sort of creased cloth hat soldiers call a cunt cap and dragging behind an army duffle bag, dropped from the doorway of a slow-moving boxcar onto the ballast between the trains. He methodically beat the road dust from his fading jeans and sat down wearily on the duffle bag. After awhile, he mopped his face on the sagging, grey front of his T-shirt and peered up at the empty desert sky.

The freight cars groaned and bumped to a halt. From the direction of the freeway overcrossing—where the tracks of the freight yard separated from the double main line like the sinuous fingers of an elongated hand—came the hoot of a yard switcher. The couplings banged like artillery and the chain of empty cars began to move lethargically back. The boxcar in which the young man had been traveling came abreast of him. He stared as if he were looking straight through it, failing to return the meek wave of a grizzly old man who sat, cross-legged and shirtless, in the dingy interior of the empty car.

Enough of trains for me, he thought. All the lousy way from El Paso. He shook his head unhappily.

The boxcars jerked to a stop a short way down the track. The old man poked his balding, sunburned head out the door.

"Walk all the way to Yuma. See if I give a Holy damn!"

TIMOTHY SOUTHERLY GOINS is a veteran of service with the 9th Infantry and 60th Infantry Divisions in Vietnam.

The young man chose a large chunk of pumice from the road bed and threw it over his shoulder. The projectile clattered harmlessly off the sooty side of the boxcar.

"Lousy old queer!" The young man sniffed deeply and spat beneath the cars.

The empties began to move again, groaning and scraping over the gritty rails. The stubby-nosed switcher came slowly into view, swaying through the points onto the spur. Its diesels throbbed. He could smell the pitchy smell of the hot oil and feel the heat of the engines on his cheek as it ground past. A red-faced train man wearing a cap and gloves made from the same greasy blue material leaned from the cockpit.

"Get the hell outta the yards," shouted the railroad man above the surging rumble of the diesels. "What the hell do you think this is, Grand Central Station?"

Enough of trains and lousy queers, thought the young man again, shaking his fist defiantly at the retreating switch engine.

He shouldered his duffle bag and ducking under the couplings between two cattle cars standing idle on the opposite track started across the yard. Beneath the soles of his scuffed combat boots he could feel the melted tar oozing from the sleepers between the rails.

At the edge of the freight yards a field strewn with the rusting bodies of old automobiles, wheel-less and overrun by weeds and creepers, sloped gradually up to 15th Street. Tramps cutting across the field from the tracks had worn a wide, dusty path through the wreckage. The young man put down his duffle bag and took

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a bent package of cigarettes from his pocket. He lit one, blowing the heavy, carbide-flavored smoke at the sky. Thunder clouds were pushing above the southern horizon. One had forged ahead, cut off from the rest by a bottomless band of pale blue.

There was a ridge, and then they were moving up it in a long, tortuous jungle-shaded file. The steep clay banks were red like blood and slippery, and sometimes they fell, clawing themselves to their feet again, climbing up the ridge where slivers of sky showed pale blue between the trees. They crossed a road, in the open for a moment, and then into the looming shade again through towering stands of chartreuse-caned bamboo. He used his rifle as a crutch, digging its shovel-shaped butt into the red mud and drawing himself wearily after.

A helicopter floated across, invisible behind the trees, its blade wildly beating—a sound like someone thrashing still water with the flat of a paddle. He saw it finally, between the hanging branches, leaning over and up in front as it vanished down over the crest of the ridge. The white sky gleamed like ghosts edging between the trees, getting deeper as the ground rose abruptly up to meet it; as they rose also, up the crumbling hillside, impossibly yet persistently, like an unlinked chain.

It was the 1st, and at the top they were to be paid—paid for no better reason than that the regulations said they should be. He followed the back of the soldier in front of him, fixing his eyes on the other's canteen belt, seeing his hips rock, one side up and then the other as they climbed. His hands were red from the mud, and his knees where he had crawled and clawed himself to his feet again. His boots were caked with it—the mud—layer after layer of drying red clay, heavy plodding masses that slipped down before he did and carried him helplessly after.

Then, suddenly, they were at the top, panting and leaning on their rifles. The other side of the ridge was as steep and as jungle-covered as the side they'd just ascended, dropping away into a trough-like valley from which the feathery smoke of a fire rose white against the opposite side as if it had been drawn there with a ruler. Laos, they'd been told at the briefing, beyond that, somewhere, the Plain of Jars. Two fighter bombers were circling, inaudible, high above the valley floor, the afternoon sun glinting yellow on their wings.

The helicopter was in a small clearing at the top, its rotor wobbling in a slow, whistling circle. The paymaster was a lieutenant who wore a shaggy blond mustache that concealed his thin mouth and he carried a small incongruous valise. He stepped from the door of the helicopter in the company of a burly sergeant major, both leaning low as they ran across the rough-cleared ground through the propwash. The sergeant major had a camp table with folding wooden legs that he unfolded on the crest of the ridge where they were standing. The lieutenant sat behind it on a stump and opened the valise. It was filled with stacks of Military Payment Certificates they called *funny money;* filled right up to the brim like the payoff in an old gangster movie. The lieutenant snapped the bands from the new certificates with a pearl-handled penknife and arranged them in little piles on the table with the vouchers while the sergeant major began to call their names.

Those who were being paid stood in a long line that crawled like a worm back and forth across the cleared place. The others went down the slope on either side and sat in the mud with their rifles, ready down in the ditches and behind trees, waiting their turn.

He was ten, five, three, and then he was standing in front of the table reciting his name and number to the lieutenant, hearing the hollow remoteness in his own voice, the frail vulnerable echo of it through the dripping jungle. The sergeant major counted and the lieutenant counted and then he counted and signed and saluted and then the lieutenant—as if he were excusing himself from a hastily consumed meal—slowly slid backwards off the stump and lay on his back in the already red mud with his legs still draped over it, an empty, frayed-edged hole in his face. And when the splitting sound of it came the sergeant major dove, sprawling and worming on his belly, inexplicably drawing the lifeless form of the lieutenant bumping after him over the rough ground.

Still clutching the voucher, he went down after the sergeant major, charging through the camp table as the propwash of the rising helicopter caught the cascading funny money, sucking it up in a great billowing cloud into the trees. As he crawled, he heard the shooting and the empty thud of mortar shells exploding in the mud. Above him, the camp table broke apart in a shower of yellow splinters and the empty valise cartwheeled down the slope, its two hinged parts flapping like the wings of a black, headless bird. He heard the screams then, and found himself screaming, too, so he covered his mouth with his mud-smeared hand and crawled on in choking silence. The smell was the smell of carbide—rich, decayed and stinging.

He was lying in a shallow sump between two mounds of rust-colored clay with the panting sergeant major and the dead, faceless lieutenant, listening to the roar and crackle of machine guns. He saw them finally, coming up the ridge—mottled in the shadows of the trees. They were blue-uniformed and their heads were down, shaggy with sprigs of bamboo, their rifles slung up under their arms so they could fire with one hand while they clawed themselves up the slope with the other.

Human wave, the sergeant major said as if he were noting a subtle yet ominous shift in the weather; and they watched it coming, swelling and pouring toward them up the slippery bank, blue and faceless through the sifting carpet of brown military money, past the burning mushroom of the downed helicopter and through the 1st platoon onto the hogback.

Hey kid, how about a smoke?"

The young man turned and saw two tramps, one shirtless and clad in fading overalls and the other bearded and muscular, sitting in the oblong shade of a derelict

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panel truck. They were playing cards for a pile of rusty pop bottle caps and the bearded one had paused in mid-deal. They eyed him narrowly.

The young man put the cigarette in the corner of his mouth and hefted the duffle bag, plodding slowly up the path through the dust. The shirtless tramp blew his nose into his fingers and wiped them across the bib of his overalls.

"Where you coming from, kid?" The bearded man had resumed dealing out two greasy hands of stud.

"El Paso." The young man took two more bent cigarettes from the depleted pack and replaced it in his pocket.

"I come all the lousy way down from El Paso in a lousy boxcar." He flipped the cigarettes across. The muscular tramp deftly caught them and passed one on to his partner.

"You ain't gonna like Tucson—got a light?"

The young man fished a book of matches from his pocket. They lit up and he saw the matches disappear into a pocket of the tramp's overalls. He said nothing.

"You just get out?" The tramp in the overalls asked him pleasantly.

"Yes." The young man shouldered his duffle bag.

"I was in the service once," confessed the bearded tramp nostalgically.

"No kidding?" The other winked at the young man as if they were about to share a secret. "I'll bet you was a general last class at Leavenworth." He laughed heartily.

They glared at each other fiercely over the little pile of bottle caps. The young man, taking advantage, started to move away from them up the path.

"You trying to get back home, kid?" He asked seriously as if *back home* were an institutionalized somewhere everyone was trying to get back to.

"No."

The tramp's voice softened. "Looking for work, huh?" He fingered the brownish stubble on his chin and cleared his throat. "Pinkie's looking for a 'stodian. You ever cleaned shitters?"

"Some."

"Pinkie's looking for someone to clean 'em," he repeated.

"Pinkie?"

"Tha's right, up at the Half Way House." He pointed a fat finger over his shoulder in the general direction of 15th Street. "You can get a pitcher there for sixty cents," he added reverently, "if you was to *possess* sixty cents—"

"Say," cut in the bearded tramp; "you couldn't go us it, could you?" He grinned a hideous, toothless grin. "Frenz in need, y'know."

The young man's fist tightened on the canvas strap of his duffle bag.

"They're all I got." He threw the almost empty cigarette pack on the ground between them. The bearded tramp carelessly added it to the rusty bottle caps in the pot.

"No travel pay, huh?" He nodded knowingly at the tramp in the overalls and then back at the young man. "Rode the rails from El Paso, eh?" He made his mouth half-smile by wrinkling his nose. "You *sure* you ain't still in, young fella?" He flexed his muscles menacingly beneath his tight polo shirt. "We don't cotton to no 'serters!"

The young man swung quickly away from them, shuffling up the dusty path—threading his way through the wreckage of the ruined automobiles until he'd put the deteriorating carcass of an aged Chrysler between himself and their dry, solicitous laughter.

On the far side of the field, between the Half Way House—whose blotchy, off-white plaster walls were crumbling back from patches of bare, rust-colored brick—and where 15th Street passed beneath the Interstate, was a parking lot. The johns were huddled against the freeway embankment, separated from the Half Way House by the empty expanse of the parking lot like an old time filling station. The young man let himself into the GENT's leaving the door cracked so he could keep an eye on his duffle bag by the stoop.

The GENT's was cramped, with a single, doorless stall toilet, filthy sink leaning away from the wall like a drunk hanging on a light pole, and a rusty trough made from a halved fuel oil drum, waist high and connected by a noisy section of stove pipe to a hole in the floor. He urinated in the trough and washed the streaked dirt from his face and hands and from the pale undersides of his forearms where it showed. He looked at himself in the cracked mirror over the sink. There was an almond-shaped scar on his forehead, the uppermost part of it retreating beneath his stubbly hair. Tenderly he pressed the scar. When he took his hand away there was a colorless spot the same size as the tip of his index finger on the center of the scar.

There are still some pieces of it left in there, he thought dismally. He blew his nose on a folded scrap of toilet paper and sat down on the toilet without lowering his trousers. The medics had said it would take a long time for the pieces to work themselves out. Some were so small that they couldn't even find them with a magnetic probe. By way of example, he'd been shown some bits of shrapnel they had in a plastic prescription bottle. The shrapnel looked like steel shavings and reminded him of when he was a child, arranging a bushy, iron-filing beard on the outlines of a chinless face with a magnetic wand from underneath. He put his own chin in his hands and sighed.

The floor of the GENT's was blue tile. A coffee-colored cockroach emerged from a crack along the baseboard and slowly crabbed its way across the dirty blue of the floor, its feelers feeling ahead for something that wasn't there.

Lying on his back, he could see the fighter bombers circling—watching as they slowly revolved, banking against the flat whiteness of the sky. The first blue-uniformed wave had passed over and gone down the other side in a sort of disciplined hysteria, leaping short-legged across the sump where they lay, shooting down at them

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but missing everything but the faceless, dead lieutenant who jerked and turned over on his faceless face in the bottom. They heard rather than saw the second wave coming—heard because they were beyond seeing—hearing them shooting and howling their slippery, relentless way up the same treacherous slope where the other had subsided. They came up more confidently this time. Stopping carefully to fire and then hurrying on up the slope, rooting through the underbrush as they came. There was less shooting as well; it came mostly up the ridge from both sides in planned bursts. The dull thud of the mortar barrage had ceased as abruptly as it had begun.

The sergeant major sat with his back against the mound of red clay, his helmet gone, staring into the listening part of a radio hand set. Someone on the other end of the radio was advising him but the sergeant major wasn't listening. Instead, he was watching the crackling hand set and down the slope where they were clawing their way back up.

They're shooting them, the sergeant major said listlessly as if part of him believed that he was removed from it all by an impassable void; the wounded, they're wiping them out. He could hear the splatter of carefully aimed shots and the unhappy fore-shortened screams.

He crawled over to the sergeant major past the dead paymaster and shook him by the shoulder. The sergeant major said nothing, but kept on gazing into the buzzing hand set and down the hillside where they were working their way up. Between the sounds of the firing he could hear them talking: high spitting chatter like monkeys. They were laughing.

I'm going to call in the planes, he told the sergeant major, call in an air strike. But the sergeant major didn't answer him even then, so he took the sweating black hand set from his hand and spoke into it. On the other end he discerned the gravelly, self-assured voice of the lieutenant colonel—whom they called Stymie because he'd once confessed over the radio what everybody knew already anyway: that he was *stymied*—talking incessantly to no one.

It's not so bad down there, he heard Stymie saying. Use your tactics, he chanted, fire and deploy, cover your sectors. Behind the voice of the lieutenant colonel, he could hear the remote thrashing sound of a helicopter. He rolled over onto his back beside the catatonic sergeant major and searched the sky. Finally, he spotted the command helicopter high above the circling jets, the pale afternoon sunlight reflecting through its plastic canopy. The sergeant major moaned and fired his .45 into the tree tops over the lip of the ditch. Then he lay back down in the bottom.

I'm going to call in the jets, he told the sergeant major.

The wave was on the hogback at last, milling where the helicopter had recently been, gliding through the muddy rubble and twisted, shattered underbrush, laughing and firing into the ground. It won't be long, he thought, until they work their way on up.

He changed to the preset frequency and spoke directly to the fighter bombers.

Hullo, Little Brother, the pilot said to him. Beyond the metallic sound of the pilot's voice he could hear the roar of the jet engine and the howl of the air. Things look pretty sour down there, Little Brother, the pilot said; do you want some ordnance?

He held the hand set like the sergeant major had, gazing into it as if its being there, cradled in his muddy hand, were the incontrovertible consequence of *his* being there. Then he sighed and spoke.

I'll put out strawberry smoke, he said into the hand set. On the deck, he whispered, choking on the words.

On the deck, the pilot said back to him. Coming up, Little Brother.

He took a smoke canister off the radio pack and ignited the fuse. The reddish smoke spread across the ground like something viscid spilled there. He lay back and watched the jets as they began their run, banking against the pale sky, drifting in, one behind the other from across Laos and over the trough-like valley where the smoke from the fire still rose in an elusive, feathery spire. He watched the copper-toned canisters turning end over end and heard the tremendous roar as the jets rose again above the black, orange-centered smoke of their own explosions. Through the shadow of the napalm he saw them diving again.

He turned off the radio and crawled down deeper into the bottom beside the sergeant major. A bomb exploded and they weren't in the ditch any longer and the air was choked with the buzz of shrapnel and the hot, carbide smell of burning flesh. Something struck through the front of his helmet and the radio was torn from his hands. He saw blackness and didn't feel anything at all.

The young man shouldered his duffle bag and crossed the parking lot. A breeze was bending the dry weeds in the field and the sun, appearing squeezed and melon-colored through the dusty desert haze, was slanting down over the roof of a warehouse. A bus growled from beneath the freeway trailing a noxious cloud of diesel smoke.

Pinkie was at work with a mop, squeezing it out into a bucket in the open doorway of the Half Way House. He squished the mop head in the brown sudsy water and scrubbed at the linoleum floor industriously as if he were hoeing weeds in the parking lot. The young man set his duffle bag down on the sidewalk.

"Excuse me, I'm looking for a fellow by the name of Pinkie."

"We're closed. Don't open up 'til eight." Pinkie scrubbed at a little battleship-grey patch of chewing gum adhering to the linoleum. "I'm Pinkie, so what?"

"I come to ask for work." The young man drew an invisible circle on the sidewalk with his toe. "All the way from El Paso." In a boxcar, he thought bitterly; in a lousy boxcar fighting off a lousy, snotty-nosed old queer.

"I heard you were looking for someone."

"Says who?" Pinkie leaned on the mop, filling the

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doorway with his ponderous body like the stopper in a bottle into which the young man's life had been somehow forced.

"Fat guy down by the yards: wearing overalls and no shirt."

"Fat guy down to the yards? Wearing over hauls?" Pinkie repeated slowly "That would be Richie. He's a worthless son if I seen one." Pinkie drew a breath nasally. "You a friend of his?"

"No."

Pinkie's face was wrinkled: red and angry like a livid prune. He was sweating profusely from pushing the mop and continuously dried his palms on his greyish bartender's apron. From the murky darkness beyond his shoulder came the tinny plunk of middle C being struck again and again on an electric piano and the occasional unlimbering howl of a steel guitar. Pinkie cleared his throat and spat.

"You got any 'sperience at 'stodial work? I had my belly fulla amachers, see."

"I guess I've done enough of it for Uncle Sam."

"You just get out, huh?"

"I'm out."

"Stationed down to Bliss, huh?" It wasn't really a question. Pinkie scratched his balding head thoughtfully. "I was over to K'rea once with the Expeditionary Force. I was in the 24th when the slopes took ole General Dean. In the shitter when word came down about it." He chuckled and puffed out his cheeks. They were red and mildly chapped. "I come home in '52. Got hit in the ass." He slapped himself sharply on the hip. Then his voice became serious. "You wanna work for me, huh?" He pondered for a moment as if searching for a combination of words that fit his meaning exactly. "It's not permanent, understand; just until Mel comes back off vacation."

"That doesn't matter. I'm just traveling through."

Pinkie hitched up his sagging trousers through his apron and patted his over-ripe stomach.

"Okay," he said casually, still blocking the doorway. "I guess I could give you a go at that; all I had come by so far is Mexes." He put the mop in the bucket and pumped it up and down like a churn. "What's your name, son?"

"Frank."

"Okay, Frankie—folks call you Frankie, huh—I s'pose I can use you."

The young man nodded and removed his cunt cap, folding it into his hip pocket as he followed Pinkie into the darkness of the tavern. Behind them through the open door the sky had turned the receding color of pink coral. The storm clouds were billowing across, rushing in rose-tipped fingers from the horizon. On 15th Street the pawn shops and second hand stores were beginning to empty, their bloodless proprietors setting the heavy, discouraging locks behind the last ones.

Pinkie waved a well-fed hand at the far end of the dimly lit barroom where a single amber-lensed flood light illuminated a podium. Three narrow-waisted men wearing matching cardigans were humming in harmony. A man with a creased, hard-looking face was carelessly picking a steel guitar.

"Hear that?" Pinkie spat into the bucket. He leaned close to the young man's ear and his voice growled: "College students!" He glanced sharply at the young man. "Say Frankie, you ain't been down to no sorry-assed college have you?"

"Once."

"Say, I don't know . . ." Pinkie stroked his forehead.

"I flunked."

"Well say, 'haps you ain't so bad after all." He leaned so close that the young man could smell the warm, greasy smell of bacon-and-tomato on his breath. "Some people get so smart they turn dumb. Know what I mean?" He gestured at the men wearing the identical sweaters. "I like a guy who's been in the service," he added, "a guy that can think for his self."

They stood side by side in the smoky darkness. The flood changed from amber to green like seasons passing. A girl in gold-sequined short-shorts and translucent halter came from behind the bar. An unlit filter cigarette hung in the corner of her mouth.

"Who's he?" she demanded, putting her hands on her hips in a way that made the loose flesh pucker like crepe paper around her navel.

"This here's Frankie. I'm hiring him on as a 'stodian. He just got out."

"I coulda told." She flung her hair from her forehead with a backwards lilt of her head. Her face was plain and roundish with green inaccessible eyes. Pinkie waved her away and turned on the young man.

"Now you gotta keep them shitters clean, see. Stand outside like a damn butler and make sure you put the sign out when you're in the LADIES'. There's laws about that," he said mysteriously. "I'll give you twenty-five bucks a week for two weeks. Twenty-five," he repeated, watching the young man's reaction carefully.

"That's fine; thank you."

"Twenty-five bucks a week, huh?" Pinkie's eyebrows rose slowly into the center of his forehead. His eyes were narrow and suddenly suspicious. "Just get out, huh?" He thoughtfully fingered his chin. "Kind of funny though, now I think of it, you not wearing no uniform or nothing. All the guys wear their dress greens when they come out; 'sides, a Mex wouldn't clean them crappers for no lousy twenty-five bucks a week, not even with the Right to Work." Pinkie pondered for a few moments. "What are you running from, son?"

"Nothing. I've never run from anything."

"You a 'serter?" They gazed at each other, and then, as if their respective movements were synchronized, through the open doorway where the traffic hummed dully by on 15th Street. A sliver of purple-tinged sky followed the horizon where the sun had gone down and the menacing clouds didn't reach.

When he opened his eyes, the sky was low and heavy with cloud. The rain came after awhile and fell, grey and roaring, making reddish trickles in the soft mud. He felt

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his head. When he brought his fingers away they were gritty with brown crystals of dried blood. His feet moved but he was pressed in the middle and couldn't turn himself over. It was the twice dead lieutenant. He felt down underneath and rolled the dead man into the bottom where the sergeant major was sitting cross-legged holding the destroyed radio on his lap like a tired old woman with her knitting. The sergeant major's fatigue shirt had been blown off revealing his name, JACKSON, stenciled across the front of his skivvies. Sergeant Major Jackson wasn't saying anything. He stared peacefully at the radio and shook his head slowly when the flies adhering to the dead lieutenant buzzed. After awhile, he stopped looking at the radio and spoke.

I thought you were dead, he observed. I saw you lying with your eyes turned up like the others. The sergeant major smiled a curious smile, the rain plastering his hair down over his forehead like a fringe of limp, brown seaweed.

They're all dead down there, you know, the sergeant major went on. Everyone. Every lousy one.

How do you know? he heard himself asking the sergeant major stupidly; and he replied that he'd shouted and that there hadn't been any answer. So he shouted himself—like the sergeant major had—and there was just the shuddering sound of his own voice echoing through the trees and the concealing crash of the rain and the whistling tear of his own breathing.

You called in an air strike, the sergeant major accused him reproachfully; called one in on our own guys. Sergeant Major Jackson thought to himself briefly, then he squinted his round foolish eyes. I'll have to put this in your 201 File, he threatened. There'll have to be a court of inquiry. His voice seemed to drown in the sound of itself, gurgling into silence.

After the rain, they came out of the ditch and sat in the mud. There was a deep gouge in the crest of the ridge like a nick in the honed edge of a razor. Parts of things were everywhere mixed with the tangled jungle. A short distance off he spotted a torso lacking everything but a head he didn't recognize. He covered it with a plastic poncho and didn't look any more but returned and sat down again beside the sergeant major who was as silent as if he never intended to speak again. They sat together all afternoon waiting, but nothing happened except that a fire began to burn again where the helicopter had crashed into the flank of the ridge. The sun gradually followed the clouds across and hung orangeish above the invisible Plain of Jars. Just before dark, Sergeant Major Jackson stood up and cleared his throat. Then he executed a sort of slippery about face and wandered away down the slope into the trees.

He watched the sergeant major climbing resolutely down the hogback through the wreckage of the jungle into the narrow trough-like valley without feeling anything whatsoever. He didn't think to stop him or to call him back, but just watched him, clad in skivvy shirt and tattered fatigue trousers, picking his way between the shell craters and foreshortened trees down the hillside, roughly in the direction of Laos and the Plain of Jars. He watched the sergeant major disappear into a ditch near the foot of the ridge, and reappear again for an instant scrambling up the opposite bank—a struggling, determined, totally hopeless blob in an off-white T-shirt—before vanishing forever behind a dropping curtain of chartreuse-caned bamboo.

Just before dark a helicopter appeared, circling twice over the ridge before it skimmed the treetops and set down on the same spot where the previous one had. The door gunner glared at him over the barrel of his machine gun, first with suspicion and then, as the rotor began to slow, with unabashed amazement.

On the long, bumpy flight back to Dak Tho Base, he had to ride on top of the slippery, hastily filled bags.

What happened down there? the door gunner asked him.

Pinkie watched him calmly. "You don't have to answer that, I ain't the FBI."

"I'm no deserter," the young man said without conviction, fingering the almond-shaped scar on his forehead. "I was in Dak Tho in sixty-eight—"

"Dock Toe, huh?" Pinkie raised his busy eyebrows again and grunted.

"With the —— Airborne Brigade out of Kontum City—"

Pinkie inspected the young man as if looking for a physical flaw. "Cuntoom City, huh?" He stared fiercely, west out the door. "That was pretty bad stuff—I seen it on the tube. Got a whole company of grunts bombed out by their own planes. Now ain't that something!" He made a disagreeable sound and glanced quickly about as if looking for an appropriate place to spit. He chose the floor and it landed with an audible plop. "That's how you come by that scar, huh?"

"Yes."

"Had your head where your ass should have been," Pinkie chuckled.

"We called in an air strike on our own position."

Pinkie stopped laughing. "Say, that's real tough. Why, I remember once in K'rea after it'd snowed . . ." Pinkie gazed at the staggered row of bottles and inverted glasses behind the bar as if he expected to discover the past clinging between them like cobwebs. "Awh, but it was different in K'rea. When I come home we had a big party in a fancy-assed hotel down in Houston," he recalled wistfully, "there was a senator there from the legislature; 'grachilated us. Free: everything was free if you wore your uniform. Even the booze, and the girls, I'll tell you, real nice . . ." His voice trailed off contentedly into his memory.

The young man watched the girl in the gold-sequined short-shorts polishing the mirror behind the bar. She saw him and smiled at his face, reflected backwards and impossibly remote on the solemn grey glass. You're a grain of sand, her eyes told him. Pinkie shuffled his feet.

"That musta been a nasty wound. I don't even have nothing to show on my ass. Nobody b'lieves me when I

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tell 'em I was over." He patted himself on the rump; then he nudged the bucket with his toe. "Fifty bucks a week for two weeks. There's a locker behind the shitters where you can stow your gear . . . There's a GI cot there too," he added.

The young man shouldered the duffle bag and picked up the mop and bucket.

Pinkie looked at him steadily. "If the T-men come nosing around, I don't know you from shit, see."

The abbreviated desert twilight was gone, the ominous black thunder clouds sucked down into the darkness after the sun. He dragged the duffle bag across the parking lot and leaned it against the wall of the johns beside the mop and bucket. The traffic on 15th Street had thinned. A moving van with a picture of a ship riding a green choppy sea painted on its side swept past showering him with gravel. A bus, its dome lights winking sadly, followed it under the freeway.

A card with FT. BLISS written on it was Scotch-taped on the inside of the windshield. As the driver cranked the door shut it began to rain. Pale faces watched him through the small oblong windows—lugubrious faces that melted together into a pale, incomprehensible past. The back of the bus had no windows, only an immense air scoop and red, beady-eyed tail lights. He watched them disappear into the soft, drifting rain.

He was standing beside a drunk marine who was trying without success to get to California. The marine was with a surly companion who kept plucking at the sleeve of his brown uniform and looking at his watch.

I thought you had to hadda report tonight, the marine slurred. You goin' a-wall?

Yes, he answered, I'm tired of kissing ass.

The drunk marine laughed and nudged his companion. Once y'kiss ass, y'always kiss ass, he said mysteriously. I'm a marine.

At the baggage window he redeemed his duffle bag and went to a hotel called the El Paso that faced south across the frontier. The clerk was wearing the sort of cap gamblers are supposed to wear, a translucent green bill held above his eyebrows by an elastic that squeezed a greasy channel through his hair. He paid two dollars for the night and an additional quarter for linen that was supposed to be brought up by a maid but never was, and climbed the tight, urine-smelling old stairs, his hand slipping on the banister from which the old shellac hung peeling in long strips like putrified skin from a bad burn. His room had one chair, one spreadless sagging bed, one floor lamp with a burnt-out bulb, a scuffed linoleum floor, and a window nailed solidly shut facing into a light well. He changed from his dress uniform into jeans and T-shirt and sat in the darkness by the window in a lonely, bandy-legged chair and watched a man in the room directly across the well. The man was sitting naked on the edge of his bed playing a silent ukulele. He was singing, his mouth wide and his pink, greying tongue wagging as he strummed the uke up and down on his bare lap. Because of the two closed windows and the intervening well, he couldn't hear anything of the singing—he only saw the naked man's mouth opening and closing over the inaudible words and the empty rhythmic strumming. The naked man threw back his head and sang to himself in profound silence, beating wildly on the ukulele.

Finally, he drew down the paper shade over the window and the naked man behind it but it snapped stubbornly up again, the pull ring clattering angrily against the glass. He pulled it again, harder, his irritation slipping into a sudden fury, but the roller came loose from the wall and clattered, unwinding, to the floor at his feet. He tore off the yellowed window shade paper and waved the spool like a sword.

Where were you in sixty-eight? he roared at the man in the room across the well. Where were you, you dirty son-of-a-bitch? The naked man played on, oblivious to his waving the spool from the unwound shade. The man playing the ukulele reminded him of someone he'd known in college and he called him by that name: Where were you, George Stephens, you son-of-a-bitch, where were you in sixty-eight? He lashed the window with the spool, shattering the glass into long jagged slivers that disappeared crashing down the light well. He turned away from the window, the bizarre weapon still clutched menacingly in his hand, and confronted the room. Someone was banging loudly on the wall behind the bed.

Shutcher goddamn mouth, a muffled voice whined through the thin wall. We don't want to hear any of that kind of shit.

After awhile, the clerk came and opened the door with a pass key. The hall behind him was filled with pale, accusing faces. If you have to get loaded, get loaded somewhere else and bust somebody else's window, the clerk advised. But he held them off for a while with the spool until they got him around the arms and slung him across the spreadless bed like a half-full sack of potatoes.

He stood in the shadow of the johns and listened to the traffic roaring by on the Interstate. Inside the GENT'S, a toilet swallowed and a door banged. Then he heard another sound: footsteps. The dragging, painfully slow footsteps of someone uncomfortably sick or old coming toward him from the underpass. As they drew near, he heard the tap-tap of a cane. A car swept by, its headlights probing, and the young man drew himself back into the shadows. The footsteps stopped on the far side of the johns. He heard shoes shuffle and the cane tap-tap sharply on the sidewalk. Then he heard the angry sound of voices. One muffled exclamation followed the other; then the sounds of a struggle:

". . . what do you . . ."

Something thumped.

"Why you . . ."

It thumped again. The young man heard the sound of someone gagging. He came out of the shadows, the mop held before him like a lance.

"Help me," a voice pleaded.

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He saw it move. Then there was another thump and the hollow sound of something heavy falling.

". . . told you to cover his mouth!"

"Son-of-a-bitch bit m'hand!"

Someone moaned and coughed. The young man lurched closer. In the deeper shadow of the overpass, he saw two men leaning over a third—an old man—who was sprawled on the sidewalk. They were hurriedly going through his pockets. One of the leaning men was clad in overalls and the other was bearded. The young man recognized Richie. He shouted at them, his voice echoing down the concrete tunnel. They turned, Richie holding the old man to the sidewalk with a knee across the nape of his neck.

"Now, how do you like that? If it ain't the 'serter." Richie's voice was almost a whisper, low and controlled.

"Leave him be, he's an old man."

The bearded tramp laughed. Then they lunged, glancing aside the mop handle, bearing down on him and pouring over him in a vile-smelling wave. The young man saw the white sliver of a knife and felt it as it went through his side. He sat down on the sidewalk leaning against the galvanized pole of a parking meter and felt the blood running out. He was vaguely aware of the scattering sound of the two tramps as they fled across the field down into the obscurity of the yards.

The old man rose from the sidewalk rubbing his neck where Richie had knelt on it. He retrieved his errant cane and stood over the young man.

"Scum," he said in a cracking, old voice. He tapped his cane furiously on the sidewalk. "You've got what you deserve; what all of your kind deserve!"

A place had been cleared on the hillside and the ground was red and raw-looking where the earth moving machines had been at work clearing away the jungle. There were three of them receiving commendations. Three Distinguished Service Crosses and three Purple Hearts. He was the last of the three, standing at attention, his knees slightly bent in his fatigue trousers and his eyes half-closed in the brilliant sunshine.

Around them green-fringed ridges marched away in every direction, casting their shadows across the narrow valleys. Finally, it was his turn. The Brigade Commander stood at attention before him and they saluted. Stymie was beside him, like an orderly pinning the ribbons to his fatigue shirt. By the order of the President and Congress, I am directed, he began, for not deserting your post . . . But then his voice turned soft and he extended his hand to shake. Hell son, he said smiling, you should have received this medal just for surviving. They saluted again and stood at attention. We appreciate what you've done, the Brigade Commander said. □

CAROL BAKER HANSEN

BY AN UNKNOWN MASTER

A budding fifteenth-
century Flemish witch
prepares a potion
for love. Her breasts
are high, hard as apples,
her belly a pear
or mirror.

Heart of dove,
swallow's womb, ambergris.
Begin with these.

She handles the herbs
carelessly, her face
turned; a dog
sleeps at her feet. As if
the philtre's efficacy
were lodged
in that illusion.

A casual white
magic, benign and practical.
Even her broom gives milk.

The young man already
at her door sees
what we cannot, her tight
buttocks, straight back.
The absent preparation half-
accomplished she
is thinking of him.

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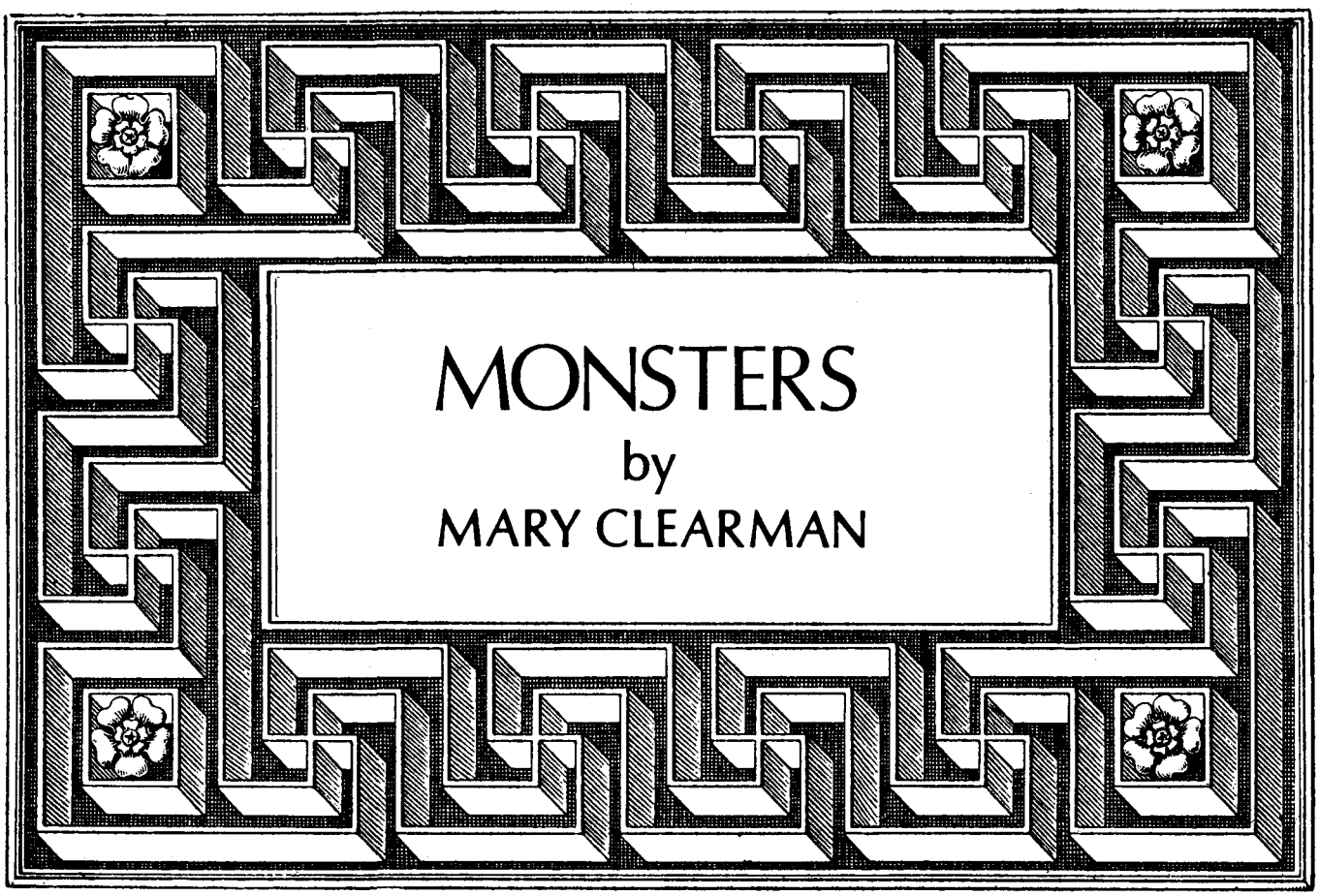

MONSTERS

by

MARY CLEARMAN

The cries of the wild geese drifted down like the November snow to the prairie, faraway as if the flocks were abandoning the world for good. Gary Jeanmaire stopped pitching hay off the rack and tipped back his head, squinting against the hard flakes that stung his face and beaded the ruff of his parka, but the geese were far above the storm front and the lowering smoke from the pulp mills away on the slopes of the Rockies. Only the disembodied cries, wild and inarticulate, pierced the cloud cover.

Gary listened until the cries faded and he was alone again in the falling snow with the silent cattle. Then he plunged his pitchfork back into the hay, jabbing and pitching until he felt warm again and had shaken away his memory of one of the old peoples' tales—that one winter the geese would migrate for the last time.

The cattle, shaggy and dumb, had never left off plodding after the hay Gary had pitched into the fresh snow. The little heifer Babe had bought at the last cattle sale tried to get her share, but the older cows butted her and drove her away. She straggled on the fringe, trying to snatch a wisp or two. When Gary pitched her a good-sized bunch of hay over the backs of the others, they turned and drove her away from that, too. They had plenty, they just didn't want to see her get any. Cattle were bound together by the herd instinct, but they had no other sense of kind. Except for their calves. They'd fight to drive predators away from the calves. Packs of dogs or coyotes or men, whatever came prowling.

Babe was wintering forty head of cattle and Gary didn't notice any were missing from the bunch trailing the hayrack until he jumped down off the load to start the tractor and pull ahead. Then he saw the dark shape under the lone box elder tree in the corner of the feedlot that butted against Highway 2. It was too dark to see much through the falling snow, but the shape had to be that old Hereford cow, gone off by herself to have her calf. Gary glanced back over the bunch. She was gone, all right.

It seemed to him a hell of a time of year for a cow to be calving, but Babe had picked her up cheap at the sale and could turn a few dollars if he could get her and the calf through till spring. She was artificially inseminated. Those big calves from the frozen sperm of foreign bulls, Charolais and Simmental and Chianinna, were weighing maybe a hundred and twenty, hundred and thirty pounds at birth and were bringing fancy prices, but they were a bitch to calve out. Too many of those big artificial calves were coming out backwards, too many hiplocked cows in labor. It seemed to Gary to be what came of fucking around with what was natural.

He finished feeding and turned to drive his pitchfork

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into one of the uncut bales when he saw Babe just coming out of the shed, a bucket in each big hand. He knew Babe couldn't hear him over the roar of the tractor, but he yelled and waved anyway. As if by instinct, Babe looked up, and Gary gestured down toward the box elder tree and the cow under it. Babe looked and nodded to show he understood, then trudged on with his buckets of feed. A few mintues later Gary saw him making his way across the far end of the feedlot, bearlike in his snow-crusted mackinaw. Babe took good care of his stock; Gary gave him that much.

Gary drove the tractor out of the feedlot, closed the gate behind him, and parked the outfit in the lee side of the shed. It was sheltered there, but getting colder. The snow kept falling. When Gary looked toward the house and the yardlight, the snow turned into blinding yellow pinwheels, hypnotic as if it meant to suck up anybody who looked into it. Gary shook his head and closed his eyes hard for a minute. He knew the snow didn't mean anything, it just fell and buried things. Already the yard was buried in a sweep of white, and the roofs of Babe's shabby buildings, and all the prairie between Babe's place and the Sweetgrass Hills, beyond which the old people said the ghosts chanted and gibbered forever. All the junk buried, old machinery and trash and beer cans along the highway, sagging houses and leafless trees and fences; the whole country pure and frozen and empty under six inches of dead white snow.

Gary turned up the seat of the tractor and turned off the lights, careful as always of Babe's property. Working for Babe Boniface was something he'd have said he'd never do, back five years ago when he was a senior in high school and Babe was still county sheriff. These days he'd never say there was a thing he knew he'd never do.

Hard grains of snow shook off on the floor as he pulled off his parka in the back entryway where Mrs. Boniface kept eggs and egg cartons and stacks of the *Herald of Holiness*. She stuck her head around the door from the kitchen as Gary flexed his fingers and worked the feeling back into them. The muscles of her face squirmed with her perpetually worried look. Strange how such a good Christian lady always looked so worried, Gary thought. Of course, she'd never gotten used to Gary, to having an Indian around the place and eating in the kitchen. Gary stamped to get the snow off his boots and the bottoms of his Levi's, and after a minute Mrs. Boniface handed him the broom to help out.

"What became of Babe? The phone's been ringing and ringing for him."

"He's got a cow down. Went to see if she's calving."

"Oh." Mrs. Boniface peered out the window, but it was too dark to see past the fence and the yellow circle thrown by the yardlight. Then the phone rang in the kitchen and she went scurrying to answer it.

Gary sat down on the straight-backed wooden chair in the corner of the kitchen where he always sat, smelling fried onions and potatoes and the steam from his own wool shirt. Mrs. Boniface had the telephone receiver pressed to her ear and was listening hard, her eyes roaming the kitchen until they hit Gary and glanced off. "He's real clean for a breed," he'd once heard her saying into the telephone. But he didn't give a shit about that any more, either.

"Well, I can't say when he'll be back. Gary, he tells me there's a cow down, maybe calving."

She listened intently for perhaps another minute, then straightened up like somebody'd shoved the broom handle up her. "I can't say! He's got his cow to see about, and he ain't even had his supper yet. Looks to me when a man gets voted out of public office, they shouldn't always have to be calling him away from his own business to mind theirs."

Whoever was on the other end apparently tried to argue, for Mrs. Boniface made an angry little noise and slammed the receiver down. She looked out the window for Babe, cupping her hands against the dark glass.

"It's all gonna be burned if he don't get in here pretty soon," she complained, stirring her fried potatoes. A slice of potato hopped out of the frying pan and fell on the linoleum in a whitening circle of grease. Mrs. Boniface picked it up and peered sharply at it before she dropped it back into the pan. "It just burns me up," she fretted on. "The time Babe put into that office, letting his ranch take care of itself! And after everything, they voted him out. And Babe was a good sheriff!"

Her eyes darted at Gary as if she expected him to argue with her, although Gary never said anything. "He did his job! Those that thought he was too hard on their precious brats, they should have seen to it their kids behaved, so the sheriff didn't have to be hard on them. If Babe and me'd had kids, we'd have seen they minded!"

The back door opened and Babe lumbered into the kitchen, a blast of cold air at his back. "Looks like I'm gonna have to pull that calf," he told Gary through cold-stiffened lips. "You come give me a hand. I'm gonna try to get her on the stoneboat and haul her up to the shed."

"Your supper!" wailed his wife. "And George Fiske, he keeps calling, wants you to call him back—"

"What's George want?"

She pursed her lips, her satisfaction in having news to deliver warring with her annoyance at the new sheriff. "Wants your help, of course! First he takes your office away from you and then he comes crying for help. Somebody's kidnapped the Abber baby, that's what, stole him right out of their car, and George Fiske don't know the first thing to do—" she broke off, satisfied with their reaction to her news.

"Shelley's baby?" said Gary.

It was taking a long time to soak into Babe. His pellet eyes were blank and out of focus in the big pink face that had earned him his nickname. "They sure?" he said at last.

"Are they sure? What else could happen to a baby that age, only a month old? You think he run off? You think they just misplaced him?"

"Well, Mrs. Abber, she might have come and got him. She ain't none too happy about Shelley taking care of that first grandson, I know that."

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His wife's mouth pinched at the corners until her cheeks bulged like a pocket gopher's on the way to his hole. "Mrs. Abber is under sedation. Collapsed when she heard about it. After everything she's had to stand from that girl—anyway, the rest of them, Bunch Abber and Billy and Shelley, they're at the sheriff's office now. And George, he wants you to come in. To tell him what to do next, I suppose."

Babe just stood there with the snow melting and dripping off his coat, while his wife waited by the stove, holding up her fork like it was a weapon, her mouth pinched shut and her eyes popping with what she wasn't saying.

"Well, hell," said Babe at last. "I got to get that cow in the shed, first thing I do."

Gary pulled his old Air Force parka back on and dug his gloves out of the pocket. They were still cold from before. He could hear Mrs. Boniface talking to herself as he followed Babe out into the snow.

The snow was mounding higher all the time. Much later and Gary would never have seen that dark lump down by the highway, and the cow couldn't have been missed until morning. When Gary jumped down off the stoneboat and walked around to see how she was, he could tell by the tractor lights that she had been in labor a long time. Her eyes were rolled back with fatigue and her shaggy winter hair was driven full of snow that had melted from her body heat and frozen again. A pink balloon of matter had inflated under her tail, and beneath it the snow was honeycombed and darkened with slime.

"If she could just have decided to calve before this damn storm blew in," Babe grunted. He brought a log-chain from the stoneboat and fastened it around the cow's hind legs. She hardly flinched. It seemed to Gary that she was so preoccupied with what she was doing, or maybe so far gone, that she hardly knew men were fooling around with her. Natural process, except that she'd had a big Chianinna calf put in her with frozen sperm and now it was too big for her to get it out. Natural process, natural, females of every kind went through it, even human females, even Shelley, whose breasts had been as sharp and unblemished as the glossy breasts on a centerfold girl and who had felt like wet satin up between her legs.

He shut his eyes because he didn't want to see the laboring cow and think of Shelley the way she had looked late last summer, the only time he'd seen her since he'd been back from Nam. He'd been in town with his pay-check in his pocket, about to cross the street between the Stockman's and the Vet's Club, and there was Shelley waiting on the blistering pavement outside Woolworth's for Billy's mother.

"Hi, Gary," she had said.

He'd hardly known her. She had big blue marks under her eyes and her breasts sagged like udders against her cotton maternity top. Her stomach, swollen out in front of her with Billy's baby, made her stand clumsily. Only her slim calves, immature as an eighth grade girl's, were still the same. She had stood there in the blistering heat, looking Gary in the face from a few feet away, and he had muttered *hello* and fled. Later he'd heard she had a boy.

"Wake up and give me a hand, can't you?"

They used the tractor to haul the dead weight of the cow up on the stoneboat, and then they rehitched the tractor to the stoneboat and eased back over the snow and frozen manure to the shed. Stoneboat and all, Babe hauled her inside the shed and turned off the tractor. The quiet was so sudden that Gary could hear a truck changing gears on the highway, and the thick breathing of the old cow. The yellow cast from the single light bulb turned Babe's face to putty as he shucked out of his coat. "Might be she could have it by herself if I can turn it around."

Gary looked and saw that a pair of split hoofs were protruding from under the pink balloon. So the calf was coming ass backwards, like so many of those Chianinna calves. Behind him Babe had hung his mackinaw and shirt on a nail and was teeth-chattering in his undershirt. Babe's chest was doughy and fleeced with white hairs. A dewlap of skin hung down from both armpits, staining the undershirt yellow, but Babe's arms were still grizzled and stout, ending in the great meaty hands that Gary had seen pull a kid called Pat Stays Alone out of the cab of a truck and throw him against the fender so hard he bounced off. Pat had picked himself up, bleeding from the mouth, and Babe had reached out with one of those bearlike paws and clouted him along the head. Pat had gone down on the gravel and stayed there. Babe had whipped around, light on his feet for a fat man, to meet all hundred and thirty pounds of Gary Jeanmaire coming at him on a dead run; caught him in the stomach with one fist and in the face with the other. Nobody'd given a damn. It wasn't until Babe worked over one of the Pike kids, who were cousins of the Abbers, that people had gotten riled and talked George Fiske into running for county sheriff against Babe. But all that was while Gary was still in Vietnam. He and Pat had had the choice between enlisting and getting charged with illegal possession and attacking an officer of the law. They had enlisted, and Pat hadn't come back.

The cow heaved, her legs jerking spasmodically in her effort. Her belly knotted. Slime and reddened urine ran into the straw under her, but the calf's hoofs did not move. Babe went around behind her and got down on his knees, moving carefully on his rheumatic joints. Gary saw him take hold of the pair of hoofs and force them slowly back up the birth canal. Babe's hand disappeared with them, and his wrist. His arm was up the cow to his elbow; he was stretched out with his head almost on her flank, eyes intent on what he wasn't seeing as he groped inside her.

His eyes focused all at once. "Believe the old bitch has twins in her!"

He leaned back, withdrawing his arm. It was bloody and festooned with gobs of matter. "Can't budge it. Son of a bitch is gonna strangle in there and block the other

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one. Something else ain't right in there—can't figure it. Gimme that there rope, we'll see what we can do from this direction."

They tied the rope to the hoofs and pulled. Nothing happened. The cow kicked weakly in reflex and bawled into the straw—"Baw—aw—aw" as if they were dragging the sound out of her with her calf. Watery green manure gushed out with the birth fluids and steamed in the straw.

"Hell," panted Babe. He bent over double and puffed with his hands braced on his knees. "Okay, give 'er another try. Lean into it, now—*heave!*"

They heaved together in silent strain. The blood ran into Gary's face until the interior of the shed darkened. The only sounds in the shed were the anguished pants of the cow, the scrape of her body being jarred and jerked backward on the rope, and the grunts of the young man and the old man as they heaved and labored.

"*Heave!*" They gave a mighty and concerted heave. The calf was moving down the birth canal; their momentum carried them backwards against the wall of the shed, still hauling on the rope. There was a great wrench like the sound of ripping fabric, a rush and gurgle of fluids, and the calf slid out on the straw.

"Son of a bitch!" gasped Babe. He was all in.

Gary stood up and went to look at the calf. The first thing he noticed was that it was still alive, twitching inside the swathing of bloody tissues, but something was wrong with it, and it was a long minute before it dawned on him what it was.

"Jesus Christ, *look at it!*"

The rage in Gary's voice caught Babe unaware. He stared slack-jawed, then turned to look where Gary was looking.

"What the hell—" he began, puzzled as Gary had been.

Gary strode over to the tractor and began to rummage through the toolbox, clanging screwdrivers and bolts in his urgency.

"What're you doing?" said Babe. He stopped between Gary and the calf, his face gone flabby with perplexity. "What've you got that wrench out for?"

"What the hell you think?" Gary flared back. He was bent at the waist as if from cramps, a big crescent wrench in his hand. "Can't you see that thing's still alive? I'm gonna knock it on the—head."

"Hell, Gary, don't do that." Babe looked deflated with the effort of the birth. His upper arms and chest were blue and goose-pimpled with cold.

Gary's ears were pounding as loud as if the tractor had been fired up again in the confines of the shed. The blood in his eyes darkened the shed walls and Babe and the old cow, now heaving herself up on uncertain legs. He could taste the rage, like metal, in his throat. "You son-of-a-bitch, can't you see nothing? That thing's got two heads, can't you see? You and all the rest of your goddamn kind, you have to fuck things up, you can't let nothing alone with your goddamn artificial insemination, fucking around and fuck—fuck—" He stopped because his tongue had gotten behind his stream of thought, and because he had suddenly remembered the wild geese and how they had abandoned such a fucked-up world with nothing in it but smoke and pollution and frozen sperm and pricks like Babe and Billy Abber, who had Shelley. He felt absolutely certain the wild geese would never return.

Babe's face was nearly tied in a knot in his effort to figure out what Gary was talking about. "I never inseminated her, she was that way when I bought her. What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing's the matter with me that some shit like you didn't do to me! Goddamn white son-of-a-bitchin' prick with a badge on your shirt, beating up on Indian kids because you were afraid to screw around with the whites—" And that recalled more grievances, deeply buried. "You couldn't be satisfied with that, you had to kill off the tribes and screw up what was left and hog the best land—and start some frig-ass war to ship me and Pat off to—and your goddamn p-pulp mills—" to his fury, he began stuttering again.

"You're nuts," said Babe, baffled. "I never killed no tribes. What the hell you talking about? Come on, put that wrench down. What do you want to kill that calf for, anyway? It'll likely be dead before morning."

"Because it's a goddamn fucking monster, that's why," Gary screamed. His throat was raw with the need to puncture Babe's thick skin of incomprehension. "Look at it, can't you, *look at it!*"

Babe turned obediently, and stopped.

"Look there," he said. "She's motherin' it."

The old cow had tottered to her feet, afterbirth still dripping in a gob of bloody tissue from her uterus, and found her calf. She nuzzled it, stripping the birth sac away from first one head and then the other so it could breathe. Gary watched with Babe as she worked at the sodden orange fur with her tongue, coaxing the thing she had delivered to stay in the world of the living. The calf began to take shape out of the formless purplish heap it had been, and Gary could see that the two heads were joined at the base of the shoulder. The calf had two normal front legs and two rudimentary ones dangling just behind them. Incredibly, both heads moved, breathing. One eye was open, an ordinary milky-blue newborn's eye, white-lashed.

The wrench hung like a dead weight in Gary's hand, but the moment to use it had passed. He stared down at the wrench, hanging there like an extension of his forearm, a rusted metal finger with a mean head. He was trying to maintain his rage, but it kept slipping away like wisps of gauze no matter how he snatched after it; and behind it, trying to see through the rage, were faces, dead yellow faces.

"Don't know when I ever seen you get so mad, Gary," said Babe. His voice was relief-soaked. "Made me think of the way you used to be before you joined the Air Force."

Gary looked at him. The dirty light made an old man out of Babe, turning his face to putty and his skin to dead yellow wrinkles. Damned old fool, Gary told him-

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self, hasn't put his shirt back on. His mouth was dry. The dead faces grinned.

"Hell, I know I used to be hard on you boys. Maybe harder than I needed to be. Thing was, at times I was looking for somebody to pound on. Mrs. Boniface, she's a good Christian lady and all, but she ain't—*you* know." A flaccid eyelid dropped in a wink. "Hell Gary, I always thought of you boys like my own. Wanted you to grow up right."

"Do all that to your own—jerk them out and beat hell out of them and ship them off to get their asses shot off—"

Babe laughed. "Now, that's not how it was. Listen. Plenty of people wondered how come you hired on to work for me, after everything. Guess they wondered how I'd ever trust you. But for me, it was like having my own come back." His eyes grew soft, fixed on Gary. "That's how it was for you, too. Right? Like my own son coming back."

The words were falling all around Gary, no competition for the spectres that gibbered at him through the rage of his anger that had dissipated as surely as the birth sac the old cow had licked from her freakish offspring. He tried again to whip up his wrath at Babe and all his kind who created monsters, and against the monsters themselves.

"You're nuts yourself," he managed to croak. "I came to work for you because it was all the job I could find."

The door of the shed opened and Mrs. Boniface stuck her head in. She had tied a snarled wool scarf around it. "George Fiske called again," she complained. Then she saw Babe and gave a little shriek. "What's the matter? Where's your shirt?"

Babe reached foolishly for his shirt, as if he had forgotten it. "What's the matter with George?"

"Something about that Abber baby. He don't think it was a kidnapping, thinks you might be able to get something more out of Shelley. Wants you to come into town, first thing in the morning." She let the door of the shed close behind her. "You ask me, Shelley did something to that baby. I never thought that kidnapping story sounded right. She claimed she stopped the car at the crossroads store to buy a pack of chewing gum and when she came back out to the car, the baby was gone. But nobody else seen any traffic, and—" Just then she noticed the calf, and yelped again. "What's the matter with it?"

"Don't get all het up," Babe told her, putting on his coat. "Likely be dead by morning."

"Too bad." Her eyes were avid. "I betcha we could sell it to a carnival."

Gary half-listened to her as she chattered about Shelley, what a trial the girl had been to Mrs. Abber, and what an unnatural mother, often letting her baby cry while she sat and looked at it like she had no idea what it was. Shelley, who had once slipped her hand into Gary's, trusting as a six-year-old, and looked up at him, and the expression in her eyes, what she expected him to give, had made him panic. *No, Shelley! I don't have it!* The yellow faces crowded up. One was very close to his face, grinning into it; whether because of Shelley or because of what it saw in Gary's face, he didn't know. He blinked and knew he was staring at the dirty yellow electric light bulb.

He rode into town in the truck with Babe the next morning helping to shovel their way out to the road where the highway crews had been through with the snowplows. And he was with Babe afterward, driving ten miles east of the crossroads store with half a dozen other cars following. George Fiske, the coroner, Bunch Abber and Billy. And a few of the curious. It had taken Babe, the fearsome sheriff of her childhood, to force the account from Shelley.

Gary sat in the cab of the truck and watched Babe cross the road, hitching his coat up against the wind and taking a quick look at the horizon for the next Canadian cold front that was supposed to be on its way. Babe got down in the ditch and squatted by the entrance to the culvert, stiff in the knees as he had been the night before. He peered inside the culvert. Then he pulled his gloves out of his coat pocket and worked one on his right hand, taking time to fit all the fingers. He stuck his right arm into the culvert, all the way to the shoulder, and for a moment appeared to grope. His face was intent in the way a man's face is when he is concentrating not on the snow and frozen weeds and the road in front of him, but on what he cannot see. Then he got hold of what he was groping for, and drew out his arm. The men in the other cars jumped out of their heated seats and ran to look.

"Can't figure it," one of them said as they hurried past the truck where Gary huddled. "She must be some kind of freak. She must be wrong in the head, to do such a thing. Can you figure it?"

I just wanted to put it back! Shelley had wept.

Gary jumped out of the overheated cab, but he turned away from the knot of men standing around the frozen blue bundle. It seemed to him more comprehensible to put it back than to bring monsters into the world. They gibbered around him, the monsters he had once tried to kill, the yellow dead faces that had grimaced up at him against a green and blue sky, hands clutching any part of the helicopter where they could find a hold. *Smash the chicken-shit sonsabitches once we get enough altitude,* said the sergeant, and Gary had brought the wrench down hard on those clutching hands until they let go and the faces fell away into the blue and green sky. He brought the wrench down again and again, in his rage hitting Babe and Billy Abber, whose sperm might have been frozen but no less frozen than Gary's own, and smashing their grinning faces. He had driven them away and cherished his rage, but now the faces gibbered all around him, laughing at the monstrous rage within him.

He turned and began to walk down the snowswept highway. Ahead of him were miles of snow-covered prairie, dead white under the frozen blanket, and the invisible Sweetgrass Hills. □

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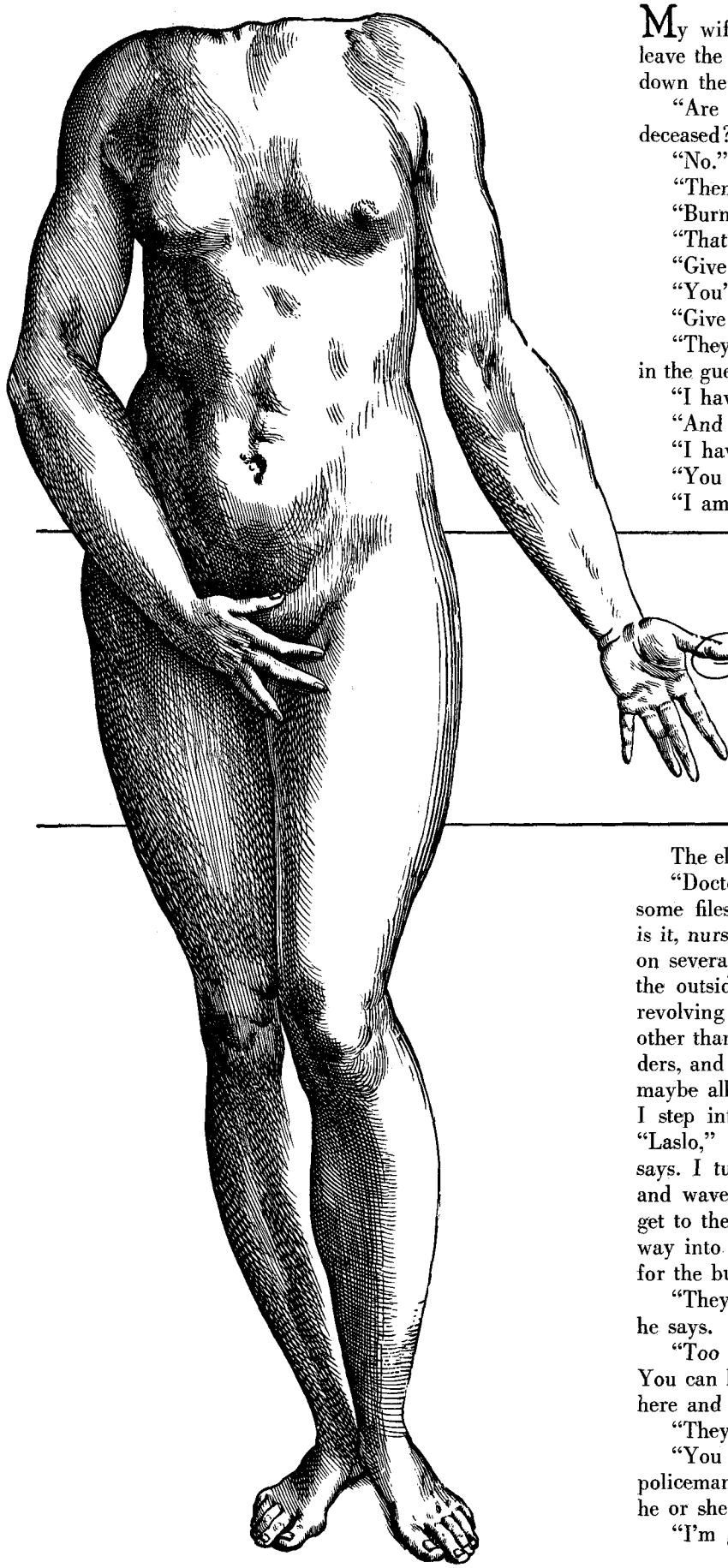

My wife dies. Now I'm alone. I kiss her hands and leave the hospital room. A nurse runs after me as I walk down the hall.

"Are you going to make arrangements now for the deceased?" he says.

"No."

"Then what do you want us to do with her body?"

"Burn it."

"That's not our job."

"Give it to science."

"You'll have to sign the proper legal papers."

"Give me them."

"They'll take a while to draw up. Why don't you wait in the guest lounge."

"I haven't time."

"And her toilet things and radio and clothes."

"I have to go." I ring for the elevator.

"You can't do that."

"I am."

The Signing

by Stephen Dixon

The elevator comes.

"Doctor, doctor," he yells to a doctor going through some files at the nurse's station. She stands up. "What is it, nurse?" she says. The elevator door closes. It opens on several floors before it reaches the lobby. I head for the outside. There's a security guard sitting beside the revolving door. He looks like a regular city policeman other than for his hair, which hangs down past his shoulders, and he also has a beard. Most city policemen don't; maybe all. He gets a call on his portable two-way set as I step into one of the quarters of the revolving door. "Laslo," he says into it. I'm outside. "Hey you," he says. I turn around. He's nodding and pointing to me and waves for me to come back. I cross the avenue to get to the bus stop. He comes outside and slips the two-way into his back pocket and walks up to me as I wait for the bus.

"They want you back upstairs to sign some papers," he says.

"Too late. She's dead. I'm alone. I kissed her hands. You can have the body. I just want to be far away from here and as soon as I can."

"They asked me to bring you back."

"You can't. This is a public street. You need a city policeman to take me back, and even then I don't think he or she would be in their rights."

"I'm going to get one."

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The bus comes. Its door opens. I have the required exact fare. I step up and put my change in the coinbox.

"Don't take this man," the guard says to the bus driver. "They want him back at the hospital there. Something about his wife who was or is a patient, though I don't know the actual reason they want him for."

"I've done nothing," I tell the driver and take a seat in the rear of the bus. A woman sitting in front of me says "What's holding him up? This isn't a red light."

"Listen," the driver says to the guard, "if you have no specific charge or warrant against that guy, I think I better go."

"Will you please get this bus rolling again?" a passenger says.

"Yes," I say, disguising my voice so they won't think it's me but some other passenger, "I've an important appointment and vour slow-poky driving and intermittent dawdling has already made me ten minutes late."

The driver shrugs at the guard. "In or out, friend, but unless you can come up with some official authority to stop this bus, I got to finish my run."

The guard steps into the bus, pays his fare and sits beside me as the bus pulls out.

"I'll just have to stick with you and check in if you don't mind," he says to me. He pushes a button in his two-way set and says "Laslo here."

"Laslo," a voice says. "Where the hell are you?"

"On a bus."

"What are you doing there? You're not through yet."

"I'm with the man you told me to grab at the door. Well he got past the door. I tried to stop him outside, but he said I needed a city patrolman for that as it was a public street."

"You could've gotten him on the sidewalk in front."

"This was at the bus stop across the street."

"Then he's right. We don't want a suit."

"That's what I thought. So I tried to convince him to come back. He wouldn't. He said he'd kissed some woman's hands and we can have the body. I don't know what that means but want to get it all in before I get too far away from you and lose radio contact. He got on this bus. The driver was sympathetic to my argument about the bus not leaving, but said it could be illegal his helping to restrain the man and that he also had to complete his run. So I got on the bus and am now sitting beside the man and will get off at the next stop if that's what you want me to do. I just didn't know what was the correct way to carry out my orders in this situation, so I thought I'd stick with him till I found out from you."

"You did the right thing. Let me speak to him now."

Laslo holds the two-way radio in front of my mouth. "Hello," I say.

"The papers to donate your wife's body to the hospital for research and possible transplants are ready now, sir, so could you return with Officer Laslo?"

"No."

"If you think it'll be too trying an emotional experience to return here, could we meet some place else where you could sign?"

"Do what you want with her body. There's nothing I ever want to have to do with her again. I'll never speak her name. Never go back to our apartment. Our car I'm going to let rot in the street till it's towed away. This wristwatch. She bought it for me and wore it a few times." I throw it out the window.

"Why didn't you just pass it on back here?" the man behind me says.

"These clothes. She bought some of them, mended them all." I take off my jacket, tie, shirt and pants and toss them out the window.

"Lookit," Laslo says, "I'm just a hospital security guard with a pair of handcuffs I'm not going to use on you because we're in a public bus and all you've gone through, but please calm down."

"The underwear I bought myself yesterday," I say to him. "I needed a new pair. She never touched or saw them, so I don't mind still wearing them. The shoes go, though. She even put on these heels with a shoe repair kit she bought at the five and dime." I take off my shoes and drop them out the window.

The bus has stopped. All the other passengers have left except Laslo. The driver is in the street looking for what I'm sure is a patrolman or police car.

I look at my socks. "I'm not sure about the socks."

"Leave them on," Laslo says. "They look good. I like brown."

"But did she buy them? I think they were a gift from her two birthdays ago when she gave me a cane picnic basket with a dozen and a half pairs of different colored socks inside. Yes, this is one of them," and I take them off and throw them out the window. "That's why I tried and still have to get out of this city fast as I can."

"You hear that?" Laslo says into the two-way radio, and the man on the other end says "I still don't understand."

"You see," I say into it, "we spent too many years here together, my beloved and I—all our adult lives. These streets. That bridge. Those buildings." I spit out the window. "Perhaps even this bus. We took so many rides up and down this line." I try to uproot the seat in front of me but it won't budge. Laslo claps the cuffs on my wrists. "This life," I say, and I smash my head through the window.

An ambulance comes and takes me back to the same hospital. I'm brought to Emergency and put on a cot in the same examining room she was taken to this last time before they moved her to a semi-private room. A hospital official comes in while the doctors and nurses are tweezing the remaining glass splinters out of my head and stitching me up. "If you're still interested in donating your wife's body," he says, "then we'd like to get the matter out of the way while some of her organs can still be reused by several of the patients upstairs."

I say "No, I don't want anyone walking around with my wife's parts where I can bump into him and maybe recognize them any day of the year," but he takes my writing hand and guides it till I've signed. □

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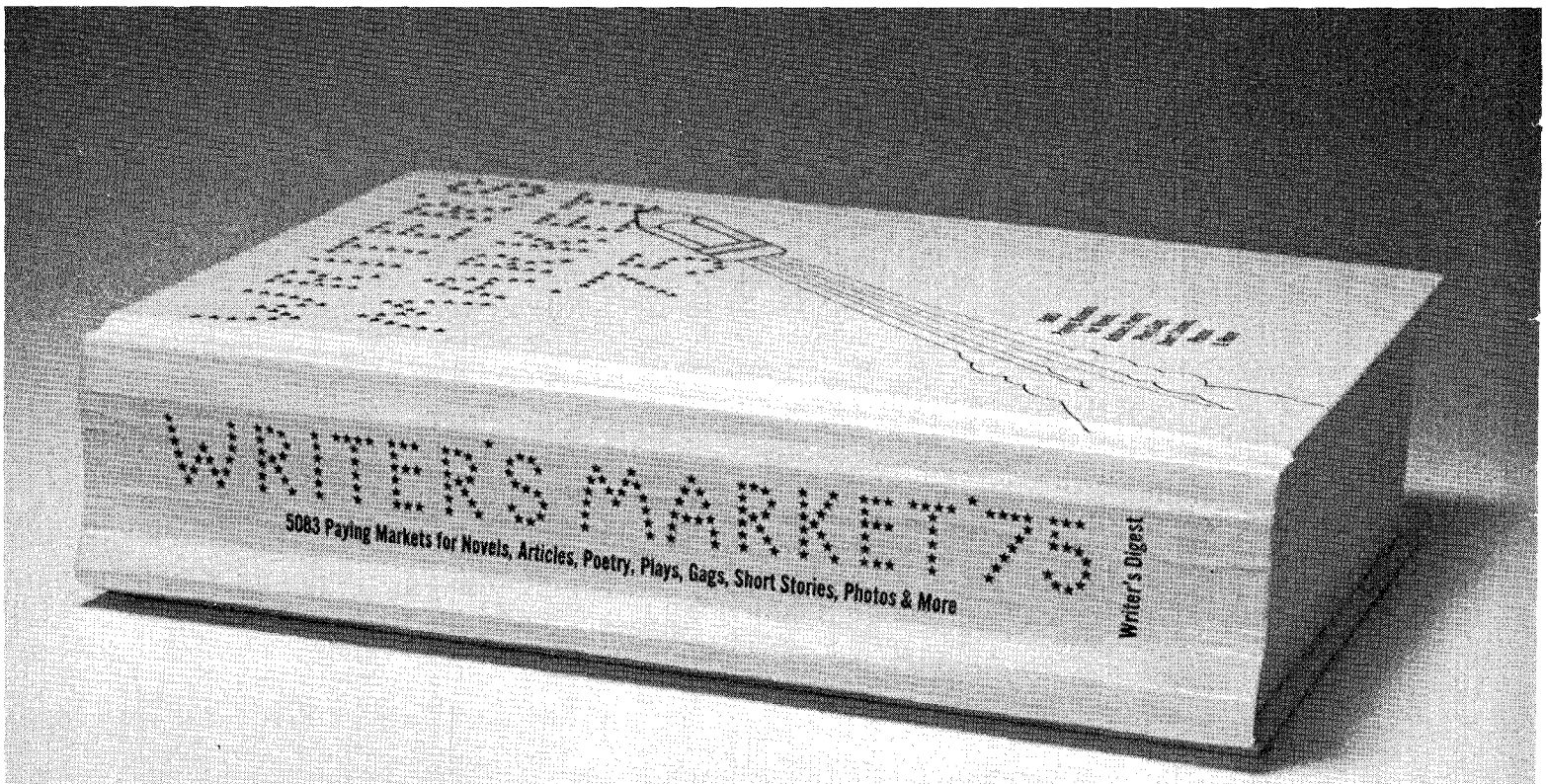

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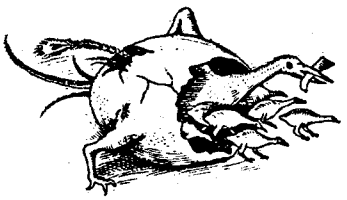

I. THIS IS NOT IT

Coffy, a novel by Paul Fairman (Lancer Books, 95 cents). As in, "Samuel Z. Arkoff presents an American International Picture—*Coffy*." As in, "She's hot and black and she'll cream you!"

Coffy's Hit Chart

the hit	*hit person*	*comments*
—sawed off shotgun, two barrels, in the face ("He saw Sugar-Man's profile disappear with the rest of his face in a slow splash of blood and flesh and bone. He saw the back of Sugar-Man's head open like a door kicked out from the inside—splintered into a lazy mass of brain matter and bone and blood. The mixed residue of what had been the head of a man now fell in slow, lazy waves down his naked body. Only a stump of a red-fountain neck remained.")	Coffy	this is the opening scene of both the novel and the film
—enforced overdose of heroin	Coffy	the second scene
—beating with baseball bats	two hoods	some touching interiors of an orphanage just before
—being dragged behind a car at high speed; around corners, over curbs, up stairs	two hoods	the same guys
—police car pushed over cliff	Coffy	the cop is a hood
—crushed against garage door by a car ("A moment of frozen unbelief cost Aleva his life. He stared like a landed fish. Then it was too late. The Buick hit him dead center. His torso bulged upward as the bumper smashed his legs off and the hood slammed into the wall, grinding the blood and flesh and bone that had been Aleva into the wood until the four components were ground together in a hash.")	Coffy	blood and flesh and bone

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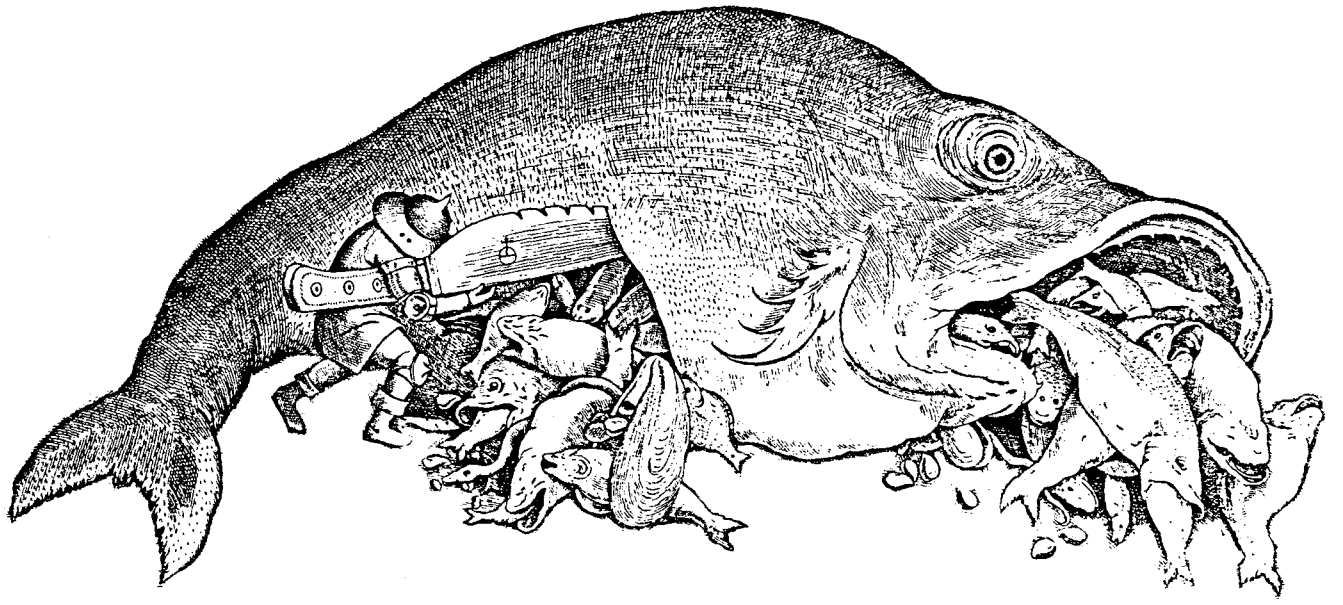

the hit	*hit person*	*comments*
—shot gun blast in the face	Coffy	
—shot gun blast in the chest	Coffy	you can't keep a good hit down
—shot gun blast in the crotch	Coffy	
—throat slit (during rape) with a hair-pin	Coffy	yes, a hair-pin

Coffy, both as novel and as film, is entirely surface action. And for popular entertainment, action is its own justification. But there are some interesting clichés standing behind the clichés of battered flesh, bone, and blood. Coffy herself is Black and Female, but the simple reversal of image isn't all that makes this work go. As the Spirit who made her might consider, " 'Now let's see—her father is a drunken bum—her mother an illiterate victim of frustration—her sister a streetwalker. So let's give this one the guts to do something—like perhaps shunning the gutter to educate herself and become an RN.' "

So she's a professional, another reversal of image. But notice an entirely new stereotype being formed. "Her father is a drunken bum," "her mother an illiterate victim of frustration"—the language of social science has become interchangeable with the old-fashioned simplistic views of race. White classes are less likely now to type Blacks according to laziness, gullibility, watermelons, fried chicken, and natural rhythm. Instead the same slots are filled with TV-documentary-bred notions of Black matriarchy, thirty percent ghetto unemployment, self-help programs, HEW, HUD, OEO, welfare rights, soul food, and Issac Hayes.

And we all know about drugs in the ghetto (now that they're in the suburbs, too). Coffy has an eleven-year-old sister strung out on heroin, and that's why she puts that shotgun to the dealer's head. White audiences can appreciate this, not to speak of Black readers and moviegoers. You see, Coffy

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feels "an unformed yearning," the same "unformed yearning she'd felt after blowing Sugar-Man's head off." Her sister is a junkie. Her father is a drunken bum. Her mother an illiterate victim of frustration.

Coffy's politics come from the same general source, in this case staples of prime-time White TV: "Dragnet," "Adam-12," "Police Story," and "The FBI." A standard comic-relief line in these shows is the reading of the arrested's rights. Isn't it *illegal* to blow off someone's head, especially if you're only an RN, and not a police woman? "Coffy had only contempt for the functions of laws she knew would put the dope peddling pimp on the street again in an hour." We knew that. In her own way she is as pure and naïve as Candy Christian. "Only the shotgun in her hands marred the image of the weary innocent."

If you liked "Coffy," you'll want these other Lancer Books:

Pimp, by Dave Schulz
Porno Star, by Tina Russell
Mistress of Pain, by Aldo Lucchesi
Lady Sings the Blues, by Billie Holliday
The Fortunate Pilgrim, by Mario Puzo
Angela Davis, by Marc Olden
Cocaine, by Marc Olden
Dracula, by Bram Stoker
Liberated Marriage, by Susan Cohen

II. WHY NOT: FIVE CRITICS ANSWER

A. Co-option by Commercial Art (Imamu Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones])

"You say 'Black,' they give you Black Capitalism."
"You say 'Black,' they put Afro haircuts on soldiers and sailors."
"You say 'Black,' they give you *Super-Fly*."

B. Co-option by Imposed Critical Standards (John O'Brien, *Interviews With Black Writers*)

"There exist a number of critical fallacies about Black Literature which continue to impede the Black writer in America. The first is that the greatest service the Black writer renders is not artistic, but political and sociological; that he reflects the mood of Black Americans and affords insights to a White audience concerning the elusive thing called "the Black experience." Even the *Literary History of the United States*, the bible of literary scholars, cites the tradition of Negro writing as having begun with Claude McKay and Countee Cullen and as presently being continued by such 'publicists' as Adam Clayton Powell!"

C. The Manufacture of Racial Stereotypes (Ishmael Reed in O'Brien's *Interviews*)

"When somebody like Peter Prescott [literary editor of *Newsweek*] comes out and says the most interesting writing from blacks are the autobiographies of Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver, it's like saying the most interesting white literature is Richard Nixon's *Six Crises* and Dwight Eisenhower's *Stories I Tell My Friends*. I think it stems from the old Christian notion that heathens don't have souls. If you don't have souls, how can you possibly possess an imagination or be able to write poetry or deal in ambiguity?"

D. Making Literary Art, Part One (Clarence Major, *The Dark and Feeling*)

"The novel *not* deliberately aimed at bringing about human freedom for Black people has liberated as many minds as has the propaganda tract, if not more. This does not mean that a wholly human novel by a Black writer necessarily becomes assimilable for just anybody. It does mean, though, that a work that takes long root in its author's experience—race being a part of that experience—not only makes sense anywhere in any language, but also is likely either to raise hell or to lower heaven."

E. Making Literary Art, Part Two (Ralph Ellison, quoted in *The Negro Novel in America*)

"People who want to write sociology should not write a novel."

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III. AN UP-FRONT AIMS PROGRAM FOR BLACK SUPERFICTION

A personal "UP-FRONT AIMS PROGRAM" was what Melvin Van Peebles used "to get the Man's foot out of my ass . . . to get the Man's foot out of all our black asses" and make a legitimate Black work of art. He discussed the challenge in the Fall 1971 issue of *The Journal of Popular Culture*. Up to that point, Van Peebles argued, there had been no truly Black popular art. "Like *Shaft*, a detective movie, change a few lines and throw in a 'mother-fucker' or two to bring it up to date. But there was one scene they hadn't taken out—a cab almost runs over Shaft and won't pick him up and he looks surprised!" His own work would be original by avoiding clichés, especially the big one. "I think one of the problems that comes back to haunt us in our discussion, our rhetoric of Blackness," Van Peebles revealed, "is we begin to think of Blackness as a singular, whereas it's plural."

There were clichés to escape in the conceiving of his work, and then in the making of it. "The biggest obstacle to the Black revolution in America is our conditioned susceptibility to the white man's program. In short, the fact is that the white man has colonized our minds. We've been violated, confused and drained by this colonization and from this brutal, calculated genocide, the most effective and vicious racism has grown, and it is with this starting point in mind and the intention to reverse the process that I went into cinema in the first fucking place."

The film comes first. It is the most immediate way of reaching the broadest popular audience. But then a book of the film: its plot, for those who would study that; the shooting dialogue and cues, for would-be film makers; and finally the whole story of how the film was produced, so that other artists might find the feet to stand on.

The work was *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, written, produced, directed, edited, scored, distributed, and acted in by a scruffy looking character named Melvin Van Peebles. His interviewer noted how much of "Sweetback" is reflected in Van Peebles' own personality; the film shows this identity working both ways. As an artist, Van Peebles had to overthrow time-worn ideas of what his film should be about and how it should be made. As a character, Sweetback outstrips every stereotype, as his own hit chart demonstrates:

Sweetback's Hit Chart

the hit	*hit person*	*comments*
—whipping two cops with handcuffs	Sweetback	this is a long story, which starts the film going: Sweetback has obliged them by submitting as a phony "suspect" to make their investigation look good. On the way they answer a riot call, arrest and then severely beat a Black revolutionist, until Sweetback turns on them.
—incineration of police car	Sweetback with the help of some friends	the friends are some ghetto kids who are "washing" the car for a quarter; the special washing compound is gasoline. Essentially this is a very funny scene.
—a duel with the woman leader of a cycle gang	Sweetback	the weapons: sex

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The wide-open sexuality of *Sweet Sweetback* enraged Black spokesmen of the NAACP, Urban League variety. But these were the same people who wouldn't allow jazz on the campus of Howard University in the 1950s, the people who suspended LeRoi Jones from that school for eating a watermelon on campus (you don't satirize clichés). Keeping up with the mythical Sweetback, Van Peebles played him himself, including the sex scenes: conning an old girlfriend into acting the cycle scene, catching the clap from another actress (he applied for California workingman's compensation, and got it), handling every scene but the one where Sweetback, as a ten-year-old boy, gets his initiation—for this one Van Peebles used his son. Against any hassles, he had his familiar refrain: "Beats the Post Office."

In *Sweet Sweetback* most traditional ideas of writing and filming are junked. There were occasional modifications, for ulterior motives. "Somewhere I read an interview with this big director," Van Peebles writes, "where the interviewer asked how he managed to get away with such audacious shots. He replied something to the effect that as long as you kept the story moving, you can put the camera anywhere you want and cut anywhere you desire. WHAMMO. I decided I would pack the scenario with enough action for three goddam films so I would be able to get away with anything." Van Peebles' editing had the same sense of speed and spontaneity, actually working like a live TV-director. "I edit with three or four picture heads at once. I think this practice will become very prevalent in the future, but for now it's still pretty much of an oddity. To me, old-time editors seem to spend half their time comparing pieces of film. Is this shot better than another shot? They take it out of the Movieola, look, put in the new shot, take that out, put in the other shot. To me it seems much simpler to look at both shots at the same time. Hence, I had a Movieola constructed with three screen 'heads' for viewing so I could look at three different shots at the same time and compare more easily."

Because the tradition itself has been misdirected, the best Black art will be necessarily anti-traditional. *Sweet Sweetback* has little in common with media or even scholarly views of Black Lit, whether it be slave narrative or protest tract. As Sonia Sanchez writes in *We Be Word Sorcerers*, "Like accommodation itself, the expression of protest and escape in Negro literature was accommodative of the slave master's concept of an ideal white social value and system from which the Negro was excluded. An example of escapist literature can be found in the folk tales, in which heroes like Br'er Rabbit (the Negro) were praised for siphoning off the necessities of life from the larger animals (the white man). The escapist tradition exists today in the modern-day Black films where the Black hero is able to steal hogs from the pens of economic fat cats of this capitalistic society."

Hence Black SuperFiction will be drawn from a heritage other than that imposed by White society. The other heritage is one the slavemasters worked to eradicate, the expression of the captives' imagination: hoo-doo, black magic, conjurism.

IV. THE CONJURE SENSIBILITY

A. ISHMAEL REED, in the Introduction to *19 Necromancers From Now*

> "Sometimes I feel that the condition of the Afro-American writer in this country is so strange that one has to go to the supernatural for an analogy. Manipulation of the word has always been related in the mind to the manipulation of nature. One utters a few words and stones roll aside, the dead are raised and the river beds are emptied of their content.
>
> "The Afro-American artist is similar to the Necromancer (a word whose etymology is revealing in itself!). He is a conjuror who works JuJu upon his oppressors; a witch doctor who frees his fellow victims from the psychic attack launched by demons of the outer and inner world."

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B. ISHMAEL REED, interviewed in John O'Brien's *Interviews With Black Writers*

> "When I say that I am working on a 'hoodoo' aesthetic, I know I'm serious and I know what I'm talking about and this falls in line with that. They have in Voodoo a thing they call *gros-bon-ange*, and the *gros-bon-ange* is that which separates from the person after death. It carries all of his essential elements, the qualities that make him unique from other individuals. And this is what I try to do. I'm not interested in rendering a photograph of a person. I'm interested in capturing his soul and putting it in a cauldron or in a novel.
>
> "What it comes down to is that you let the social realists go after the flatfoots out there on the beat and we'll go after the Pope and see which action causes a revolution. We are mystical detectives about to make an arrest."

V. BLACK SUPERFICTION

Some of it is experimental to the point of obscurity (William Melvin Kelley's *Dunsfords Travels Everywhere*), and even more of it stretches the imagination past the limits of street-corner sensibility (Reed's own *Mumbo Jumbo*). But it is essentially an American form, as native as jazz. LeRoi Jones has argued in *Blues People* that the blues and jazz are American innovations, that neither would have been born in Africa, that both only came about from the forced confrontation of life in this country. So too does Ishmael Reed note that there have been other forms of literature besides Black novels missing from the curriculum: cowboy stories, detective novels, comic books, all of which he combines with his hoo-doo aesthetic in *Yellow Back Radio Broke Down*, a truly American work. In film, *Sweet Sweetback* was a unique experiment, but it played well to even unsophisticated audiences. Conjurism is essentially a popular art, and granted this familiarity it can work well in even such an old-fashioned narrative as Charles Johnson's *Faith and the Good Thing:*

> *Faith's Hit Chart (a narrative)*
>
> Careful, this is sorcery. If you please, haints—a whole host of them—will be revealed to you, just as sure as hearing a moaning dove will give you a backache, if you look over your left shoulder, or through a needle's eye, through a mule's right ear, or into a mirror with another person, though the most certain technique is to break a rain-crow's egg in a saucer of pond water and wash your face with it twice. If all else fails, wipe off a rusty nail from a minister's coffin, insert it between your canine teeth, and spirits, like street beggars, will crowd around you. But if you wish to be rid of them forever, say, "What in the name of the Lord do you want with me?" thrice, and the spirit will a) flee, or b) carry you to some secluded spot where it'll bid you dig until you come to a pot of money.

The aesthetics of hoo-doo and of fiction or film-writing have in common the purpose of ordering the world, ordering it according to the conjurer/writer's eye. Previous definitions of Black art have denied the artist his eye, or his "soul" as Reed argues, in favor of a sociological system of clichés. Those clichés can be subtle, in the voice of Patrick Moynihan no less often than of George Wallace. Tradition can be stiff in its resistance, however, and hence the works of new Black SuperFiction will be violently conceived, though sublimely produced. □

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Brief Notices

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ = Remarkable
☆ ☆ ☆ = Fine Work
☆ ☆ = Average
☆ = Dull Stuff

Residue of Song, by Marvin Bell. Atheneum. $3.95 (paper).

☆ ☆ ☆

A highly accomplished manipulator of language, Bell's single fault is in his glibness, his marvelously sophisticated sense of the ironic and the not-quite-pointlessly absurd; that is, one has the sense that many of his poems—eighteen to twenty-one lines long for page after page—are not so much *composed* as cut from some infinite bolt of whole cloth. Whether the fault is truly serious will have to wait for some future definition of poetry. Meanwhile, Bell is at least amusing and at best enlightening—and he is always skilled.

Jan. 31, by Albert Goldbarth. Doubleday. $5.95.

☆ ☆ ½

If Goldbarth seems an immature, puppyish echo of Bell, his chief distinction is his lesser control which allows his powers of invention to run all but amok; he is reluctant to stop while he's ahead, at the risk (very real) of turning the reader off. Goldbarth's imagery—extraordinary, much of it—comes on and on and on and on. He is this day's mill grinding away at the bottom of the poetry Establishment.

Mysteries of the Horizon, by Lawrence Raab. Doubleday. $2.95 (paper).

☆

Among the several mysteries of American poetry publishing is: how can so many respected poets be persuaded to lend not only their names but the extravagance of back-cover overpraise to indifferent poetry collections. This book is one of *those* mysteries, dreary, dull, and sometimes pretentious.

The Other Hand, by Dabney Stuart. Louisiana State. $5.95.

☆ ☆ ½

Hungry for former glories, LSU Press has turned to a poet whose earlier volumes Knopf published. This is a gentle and accomplished book—most at home when it deals with ideas, as in the short sequence, "Poems about Poetry". The dictions are oddly too-familiar—something like the sensibility of Eliot's *Quartets* shaped to resemble his earlier *Preludes*.

The Academy of Goodbye, by Paul Petrie. University Press of New England. $7.00; $3.75 (paper).

☆ ☆

A talented poet, apparently persuaded to gather together the uncollected odds and ends of the last 15 years for the greater good of his own university, Rhode Island. The poems are smooth, articulate without much risk-taking, and (yes) academic.

Like Ghosts of Eagles, by Robert Francis. Massachusetts. $7.50.

☆ ☆

Poems possibly describable as respectably sophomoric—a lot of righteous outrage against injustice, an excessive amount of ingenuous word-playing. The book's drawings, by Jack Coughlin, are marvelous.

To Open, by Samuel Menashe. Viking. $6.95.

☆ ☆ ½

The worth of these tiny imagistic pieces is pretty much a matter of individual opinion. Depending on your tastes, this book is either like having infinite riches in a small room, or it is like living in jewel box.

After Our War, by John Balaban. Pittsburgh. $2.95 (paper).

☆ ½

Proof that a sensitive and highly-educated college professor can transform even the horror of the Vietnam adventure into an exercise in aesthetic distance. The verse is prosy, tedious, riddled with archaisms. *The Lamont Poetry Selection for 1974.*

Learning to Count, by Alberta Turner. Pittsburgh. $2.95 (paper).

☆ ☆ ½

If you assigned writing a poem to a class of bright second-graders, then corrected their spelling, this book would be the likely result—eccentric, often arresting "poems" about things and sensations; poetry as Sherwood Anderson might have wanted it.

No Time for Good Reasons, by Brendan Galvin. Pittsburgh. $2.95 (paper).

☆

It is not only reasons the writer seems not to have time for. Mr. Galvin lazily turns sensible values—pro-rustic, anti-urban, the humane more important than the human—into commonplaces and clumsy dictions.

Disguises, by Herbert Scott. Pittsburgh. $2.95 (paper).

☆ ☆

A book whose ambition is competence. The poems are "easy"—that is, they set up metaphor-machineries which create unsurprising products, except in instances when grammatical laxness tries to pass for ambiguity.

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Lawrence Sturhahn

Show Business Business

> *Greed* itself, consistently rated by critics as among the world's best films, is not the film as it was directed by von Stroheim because the studio had eliminated three quarters of the original version, estimated to have been about 40 reels . . .
> —Alan Casty: *Development of the Film*

Grips, set-dressers, assistant directors, the production people who work with the camera under the lights in the studio or on location call it *the business.* A theatre owner in San Francisco tells me he's been in *the motion picture business* for 40 years. In the exhibitor's mouth the words sound strange to me.

It's a long way, a lot of time and money, from the set to sitting in the theatre and watching the movie on the screen. On the set the word *business* (as in *show-*) derives glamorously from the smell of the grease paint—perhaps? In the theatre, in fact, is where the money invested and spent is supposed to come back, where the push comes to shove. There the word has to do realistically with the roar of the crowd, or the lack of it—or no crowd at all.

The cost of making a theatrical motion picture is enormous. In the budget the number of pages, the closely compressed columns of cost estimates, can run to ten or more. Not only the many thousand dollar fee for the script writer, but the Xeroxing of the number of script copies necessary to shoot the picture. Not only all the thousands of feet of film, processing, printing, and editing, but the cost of ice water, Danish, and the gallons of coffee drunk. Yet the budget usually goes only as far as one final print.

My blindness—a production man's arrogance and presumption, perhaps—was not looking beyond that one finished print. My question: if it cost x to make, how come it has to bring back $4x$ to show a profit? This blindness—as though production was the most important, as though it was all—*that* has something to do with the jolt when the exhibitor talked of his participation in the motion picture *business.*

For the money to make the film is only the first cost. After the film is finished—whether it cost half a million or six—there is still the getting of it to where an audience can queue up at the box office and pay it back.

A film is so many minutes long, and it costs so much per foot to make a print; given that, how many prints will the distributor make to ship to how many theatres? Of course prints wear out, get scratched, are broken by accident or through carelessness—what else is new? Shipping cost: air freight, the drivers of the trucks going to the airport . . . . insurance. How much for advertising in newspapers, on television, radio? Posters? Publicity stills. And press previews—the screening room rental, the projectionist's scale? What about the people who get paid to write the advertisements, render the art work? The mountain of paper work. Executives, supervisors, accountants, secretaries, messengers, coffee vendors . . .

And a decision about the time to open. Christmas, Easter, and the summer are best. That's when everybody else is releasing their films. Who wants to compete for theatres and audiences with a blockbuster that might swamp him—a "Godfather III" perhaps?

And it's not only the right season, but also the right day of the week. Do you open the beginning—or the end? What day do people read the newspapers, see the review, and decide to go out and see something rather than stay home for Movie-of-the-Week? What day is right to build the audience so that on the weekend everybody going to the movies will go to yours?

On July 31 Hollywood Daily *Variety* printed on the front page:

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"N.Y. CRITIC SLAPS PIC DISTRIBUTION, 'LOCUSTS AT TOP' ".

In an article ("Onward and Upward with the Arts") in the August 5th issue of *The New Yorker*, the critic Pauline Kael had this to say: "The business men have always been in control of film production; now advertising puts them, finally, on top of public reaction as well. They can transcend the content and the quality of a film by advertising. The new blatancy represents the triumph—for the moment, at least—of the business man's taste and the business man's ethic. Traditionally, movies were thought linked to dreams and illusions, and to pleasures that went way beyond satisfaction . . ."

2.

The more *play-dates* (bookings) a film gets, the better chance it has to reach, to build the mercurial audience. If there are ten thousand theatres and two thousand drive-ins in the United States there is a potential of twelve thousand *play-dates*.

Down south from San Francisco is Los Angeles—Hollywood. The first trip I made this year it rained the better part of the time I was there. Battered by the gray gusts, I ankled the wet pavements, and jumped the water running in the gutters on Sunset Boulevard.

New high-rise office buildings with underground garages are next door to used-car lots that sell Mercedes and Rolls . . . Next door to clubs where nude girls dance . . . Next door to long-hair *boutiques* selling faded denim jeans and jackets on which designs are outlined with chrome brads . . . Next door to Bank of America . . .

Although Frank Moreno has since formed his own production and distribution company, back then he was General Sales Manager for Roger Corman's New World Pictures. Through the rain I had come to talk to him about Ingmar Bergman's "Cries and Whispers", which he had been responsible for distributing. He told me a print of the film cost $500 and 150 were ordered—that's $75,000. The rights cost $75,000 and $100,000 was budgeted for advertising costs. The total: $250,000.

Before the astounding success of "Cries and Whispers", no Bergman had done better than three hundred play-dates, better than $350,000 in business. As of last January, "Cries and Whispers" had done one thousand play-dates—eight or nine per cent of the total theatres in the country, and four times more money in business. For a company like New World with a low overhead, the picture was terrific!

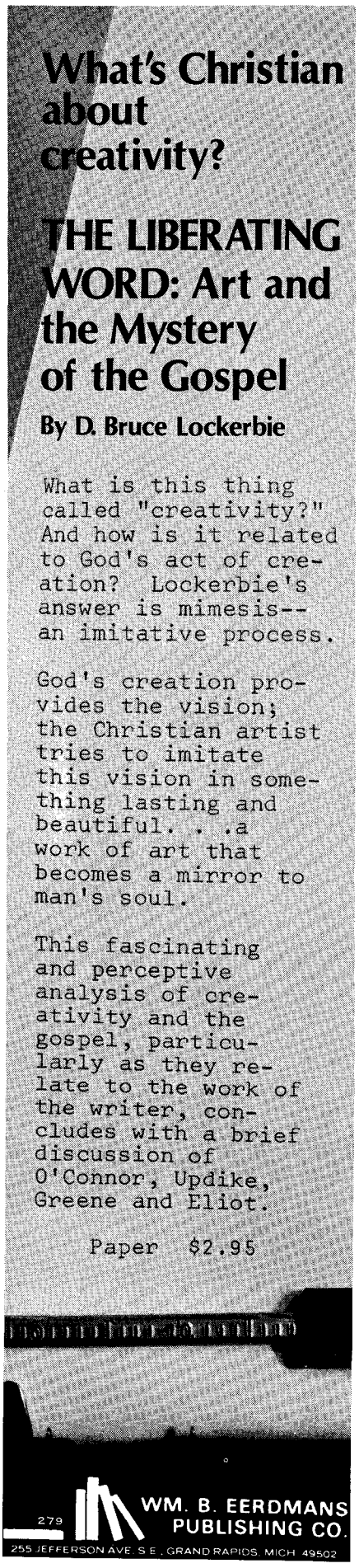
* * *

In my memory is my college town in the mid-west where I lived in an apartment over a theatre that showed old westerns, the sound of hoof-beats and shots coming through the floor. Across Dubuque Street was the theatre that showed foreign classics. Both of them are now razed.

I spoke of the kind of theatre, an Art House where, it seemed, a film by Bergman (acknowledged as one of the world's best directors) would be seen. It seemed incomprehensible to me that until New World took it no American distributor had wanted it.

Some Contributors:

LAWRENCE STURHAHN has worked as a film producer, director, and consultant in New York and California, and has been associated with the likes of Hitchcock, Huston, Coppola, Lumet and Rossen . . . . JEROME KLINKOWITZ is a rapt student of modern American fiction, especially Vonnegut's; his critical work is widely published . . . . JOHN LINDBERG is a contributing editor to NAR, and is based in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania . . . . ERIKA THORNE is food and population Fellow for Action for World Community, an affiliate organization of the World Federalists, USA . . . . STEPHEN DIXON lives and writes in New York City, a town on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. . . . . SYNECDOCHE (p. 75) will be a more or less regular feature, designed to deal economically with new books of poems.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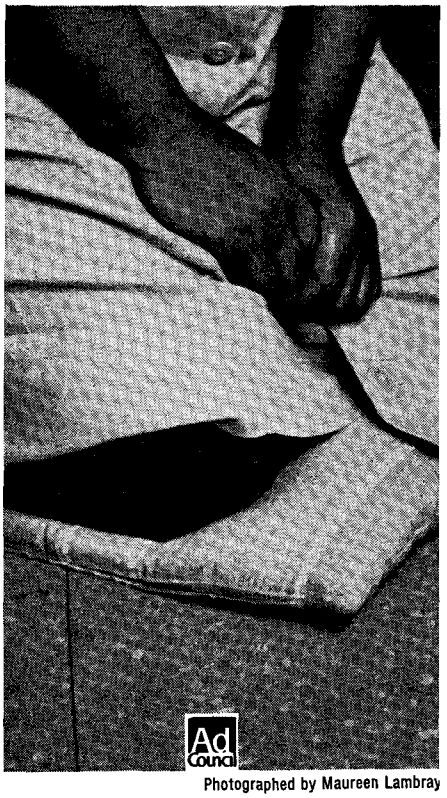

Photographed by Maureen Lambray

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It was true, he said, and perhaps it was because "The Touch" had done zilch.

What is zilch also, apparently, is the concept of the Art film in the Art house. About eight years ago the majors discovered there was money there, and they moved in, outbidding the small distributors, eventually driving them out of the business altogether. Belatedly, what was also discovered was the majors' overhead; that they had to dictate bigger terms to the exhibitors, had to run pictures in bigger theatres and bigger markets where potentially there was a bigger take. If it's going to cost one million just to distribute . . . Well, you got to be pretty sure it's going to go in Peoria.

So a generation of audience was passed over, left out of it. There's a gap where there used to be theatres whose films were classified as being special, innovative, experimental, creative, ambiguous—*artful*. This doesn't mean that commercial films can't be technically excellent, as Altman's, Coppola's, Bogdanovich's, Lucas's are; nor does it mean that some of the most successful can't be artful too. *But*, in Iowa City the theatre is gone—wiped out, obliterated; it seems to be a metaphor.

Moreno said, "Today I don't think there's such a thing as an Art film; a picture is either commercial or it isn't."

From the opening of Pauline Kael's article, sub-titled: *On the future of the movies*,

> *Sometime during the last year, a number of the most devoted moviegoers stopped going to the movies. I say "a number" because I have no idea how many are actually involved, but I keep meeting people—typically, men in their late twenties and early thirties—who say, "You know, I just don't have the impulse to go to a movie anymore," or "There aren't any movies anymore, are there?" The interest in pictures has left these people almost overnight; they turned off as suddenly as they'd turned on, and, since they no longer care to go, they feel that there's nothing to see.*

If it's not thought it will go in Peoria it's sometimes impossible to get a distributor at all—even for a fully professional million dollar Hollywood production. Tony Bill is the co-producer of the fantastically successful "The Sting." "DeadHead Miles" was the first film he produced. It was written by Terry Malick, directed by Vernon Zimmerman, cost around one million—and has never been released.

If it's thought it might, but then it doesn't, a distributor may pull it and put it on the shelf. In that case it has become fiscally irresponsible to risk more on it. I suppose the original investment is written off as a capital loss.

Sometimes a film gets rescued by the producer or somebody. My recollection is that "Billy Jack" (which I didn't think was very good, although it obviously touched some audiences' inchoate needs, as "Easy Rider" also did) was such a film. It was released, did badly, was jerked. The producers fought to get it back and released it again *selectively* (which means with careful handling in terms of promotion and the theatres chosen) and made it big. And what this shows is that exceptions prove the rule.

Regretfully, fascinating films like Malick's "Badlands" and Coppola's "The Conversation", although in distribution, are going begging.

3.

Irving Levin, a handsome, dynamic, somewhat harried man, is an exhibitor; he started as an usher when he was in high school. His father built one of the first real theatres in San Francisco. Called *La Pettite*, that was back when movies were seen in rooms in the back of penny arcades, or in viewers up front you turned with a crank.

He said he didn't think there was any such thing as the *neighborhood* theatre anymore, "people go out to see what they want to see."

I ruminated about the idea of producers releasing their own films in their own theatres. Ms. Kael mentioned that as a solution, and more recently, according to *Newsweek*, that's what Francis Ford Coppola is contemplating.

> *Director Coppola is also eager for complete control "from script to projector". He hopes to acquire controlling interest in Cinema 5, a distribution company which also owns fifteen New York theaters. Coppola is one of the few directors today with real power to deal with the majors on his own terms and one of the few to successfully create both block-busters ("The Godfather, Part II" will be released this fall) and more personal films ("The Conversation"). His is the most important move by a creative artist to control both the production and*

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distribution of films. "I hope to see distribution in the hands of men who really like film," says Coppola, "not people who treat filmmakers as children they have to keep around."

Levin and I talk about the fact that there are lot of films that have never been exhibited because distributors don't figure to get the cost of prints and advertising back. They can't be run as second features on a double bill—even if an exhibitor wanted to take the risk—because there are no prints. The exhibitors are beginning to finance film properties they think their audiences will want to see.

His theatre, *The Balboa*, is successful as what he calls a "specialty house." There is a *chemistry* that prompts him to pick what he shows.

He's an exhibitor who takes the time to be in his theatre, to establish rapport with the audience, to feel out what they like—and don't like. I see him walking around and listening to comments, recognizing some of the patrons. What's the difference between t h i s and a *neighborhood house?* "It's the clientele," he says, "it's not necessarily from the neighborhood."

There are real factors in his picking films—seeing the list of grosses, and knowing the nature of the audiences that go to certain theatres. Also, as I listened to his voice, I kept having the feeling that he believed in something else in his choice, a chemistry of fact and hunch that was occult, some magic that he couldn't —or wouldn't—talk about.

4.

> Her special targets are "the middleman in the movie world (who) is probably more filled with hatred for the artists he traffics in than the middleman in any other area," which includes the full panoply of artists, management, producers, distribution company executives. She describes the performers and directors as "calves being fattened—all on the budget of the picture."
>
> —*Hollywood Daily Variety:* July 31, 1974

I started out to write about distribution, now I feel I should describe how I felt when I read what Pauline Kael said. I clipped and filed it in August, pulled it in September, and when I finished reading it I felt terrible.

As though how could anybody care about the movie business? Isn't, in fact, what she says the truth of the matter? Really, it is, but . . .

What is truth, and to whom does it belong? It's her truth, and I don't mean to denigrate Ms. Kael, or her information—which is r e a l. The trouble is that it's also surreal, filtered through her eyes.

It's like watching a documentary and becoming aware of the director's (or editor's) bias. Some place Rudolf Arnheim—or maybe it was Andre Bazin—talks about the importance in a composition (the frame) of what is excluded—as well as what is included.

Trips to Hollywood, and people talked to; I have photographs of most of them talking on the telephone. The machine is a symbol. The gallows laugh at the end of the story that you know where you stand in the business in Hollywood by how fast they call you back.

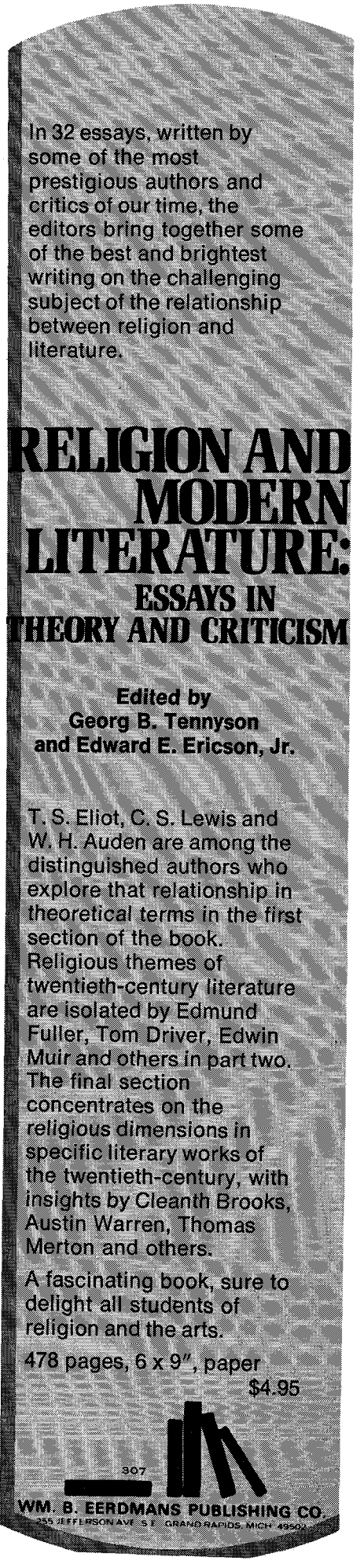
Here is Ms. Kael:

> *The artists in Hollywood are objects of ridicule because they're trying to work as artists. When a gifted director is broke and needs to work, the producers stick him on a project that is compromised from the start, and then the picture is one more failure to be held against him . . . .*
>
> *But when that thousand-headed monster sits out there in the auditorium or sits reading your book of fiction, suddenly that mass audience is what the late Moss Hart called 'an idiot genius.' This conceit of the successful—their absolute conviction that the crap that is sold is magically superior to the work that didn't sell —is the basis for the entrepreneurs' self-righteousness . . . .*
>
> *There's no way for movies to be saved from premature senility unless the artists finally abandon the whole crooked system of Hollywood bookkeeping . . . .*

And fulfilling the prophecy—as has sometimes been his habit—according to *Newsweek*, is what Francis Ford Coppola is doing. It was in August when Kael said the way was for the directors to start distributing their own films.

I called on the telephone to find out more, but Coppola was in a screening room viewing a cut of "Godfather II", which is to be released around Christmas. He was leaving the next day for Europe to dub "Godfather I" into English for its television showing in November.

Christmas week, according to authority, is *the* best box-office week of the year. So—if you had a block-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buster, you wouldn't release it then, and wipe everything else out? If that's what it takes to finance "The Conversation" . . . so that's not the business of selling pictures—

5.

It's a nice completion, coming back to where you started, but what I have been meaning lies deeper, I think. It's connected to two men, both directors, with whom I shared a meal down south.

With the one I sat in his car afterward and listened to a bitter diatribe about an industry which was so exploitive that it no longer even invoked irony. Words which had buried in them a terrible rage, under a kind of self-deprecating pity. He snarled the truth, and closed it with a bitter laugh.

He told several stories—*movie stories* as movie people tell: "Well, that morning when he went to the *schmuck* . . ." Underneath there was no fun, as though he hadn't made a choice, and his life was a trap.

I shared a meal with the other, also a director. He told the same stories about the same business, but his feeling was different. *Understand*, almost exactly the same stories, the same incidents, the same personalities. "That morning when . . ." But the laughter was open, spontaneous. It was a shared understanding of the sometimes absurd (and sometimes cruel) behavior of talented people on the ego trip that movie making is, which demands rigorously hard work, and can be creative in a compelling and total way.

We took a walk after dinner on a kind of semi-amusement park along a boardwalk above the beach. The crowds excited him, he said, and he began to invent a movie. Suppose this guy is walking here, and stops to look through these binoculars (the kind you put a dime in to see through)—so he's looking and he's seeing this girl about to have something happen to her on a rock. His dime runs out, and he doesn't have any more. Can you see it, him scrambling to get another dime. He laughed, standing and holding the handles of the binoculars. He said there were a lot of weird things about the movie business. He looked at me, and asked would I rather work in a bank? □

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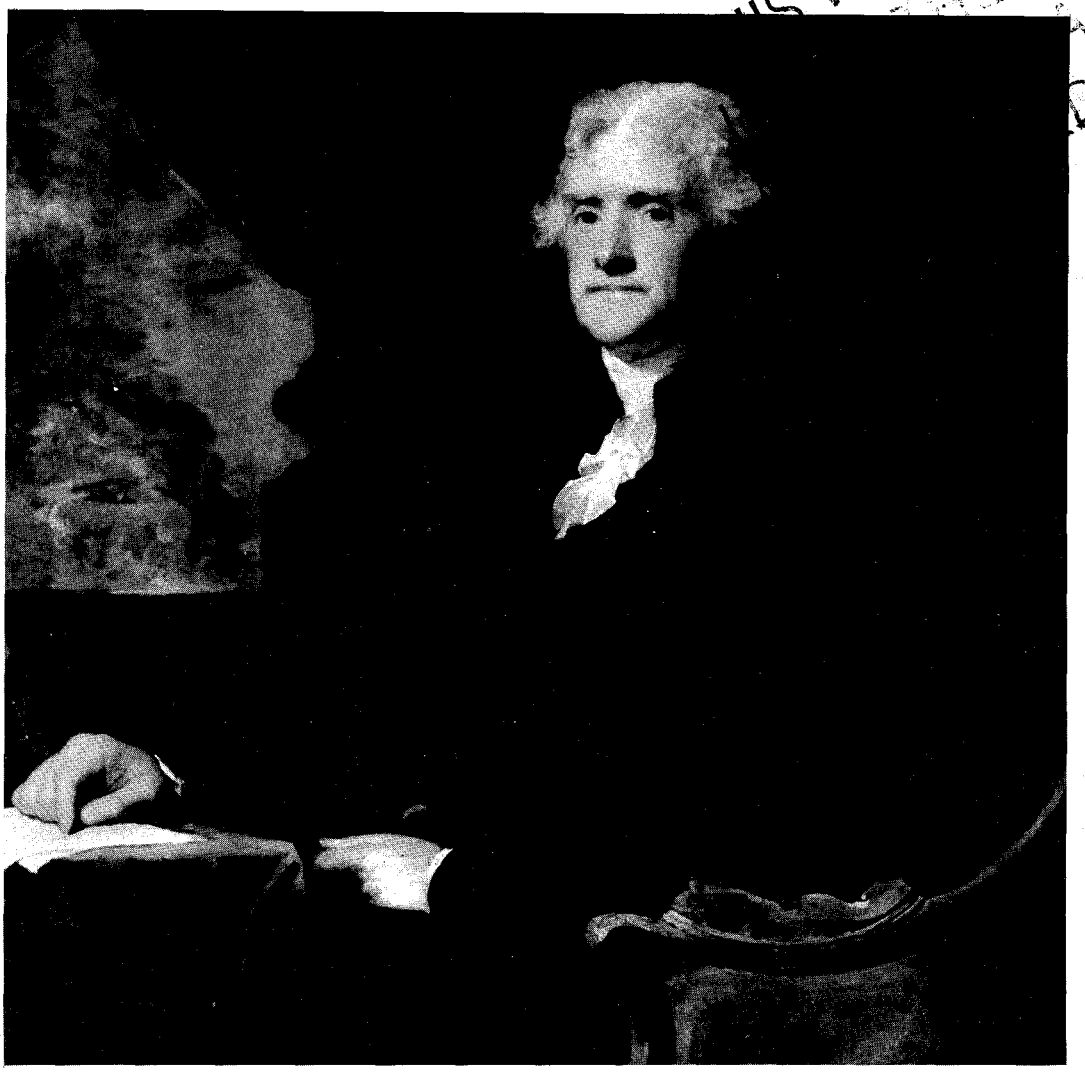

Sir

Monticello Mar. 27. 25.

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